

Hafa Adai!

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## 'Second stimulus checks may be out by end of Jan.'

FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER

The Department of Finance expects to start releasing to CNMI taxpayers the second batch of stimulus checks worth a total of \$47 million by the end of this month or in early February.



Atalig

It's down to \$600 for individual taxpayers, though—half of the \$1,200 that was handed out to taxpayers during the first round of stimulus checks.

"The stimulus

See **CHECKS** on **Page 1**

## Minority: DOL's PUA operations was messy

» **House minority lawmakers call for independent audit on Labor's system**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

House of Representatives minority members said their constituents have complained that the CNMI De-

partment of Labor's implementation of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation was so disorganized that it re-

See **PUA** on **Page 4**

## 2 more test positive for COVID-19

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**  
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REPORTER

Two days into the new year, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. announced that two

more passengers who recently traveled to Saipan have tested positive for COVID-19, raising the CNMI's total to 124.

CHCC stated yesterday that the individuals were identified by travel screening and were confirmed through testing upon arrival. The individuals were already in quarantine and were moved to the isolation area at the Kanoa Resort in Susupe for close monitoring. CHCC has already initiated contact tracing for the most

See **COVID-19** on **Page 4**

## Riamaya Nollina is 2021 New Year baby



Richelle Semens, 22, and Narphin Nartin, 25, pose with the newest member of their family, Riamaya Nollina Semens Nartin, who was born at 2:30pm last Jan 1.

JUSTINE NAUTA

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**  
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REPORTER

Richelle Semens, 22, and Narphin Nartin, 25, rang in the New Year with their second child, Riamaya Nollina Semens Nartin, who is the Commonwealth's first baby of the year.

See **RIAMAYA** on **Page 4**

## NMC DONATES TO PSS

Northern Marianas College interim president Frankie Elipitico, left, gestures as he talks to Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada during a recent meeting at NMC. NMC is providing the 8-foot barricades, shown behind them and that used to enclose the nearly-completed demolition activities at NMC, to PSS for some upcoming projects.

NMC

## AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Jan. 3, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,308	18	7,326
Recovered	7,018	29	7,047
Active	138	18	156
Deaths	121	2	123
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			101,407

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	122	2	124
Traced via Travel Screening	96	2	98
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			22,633*
Days since last community transmission			139

\*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

## COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

### LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor



## INSIDE



### BUSINESS

Docomo Pacific partners with the American Red Cross in the Red Ball in a Box event.

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### WORLD

Many bid farewell to a year they'd rather forget last New Year's Eve.

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### LIFE & STYLE

The Uffizi Gallery is making available for online viewing 88 drawings of Dante's "Divine Comedy."

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## Local

### IPI's H-2B workers seek court's default judgment

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**  
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REPORTER

The group of H-2B workers who are suing Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC have asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to enter a default judgment in their favor.

The Turkish construction workers, through their lawyer, Richard Miller, have asked the federal court to immediately rule on their request for an entry of default in their lawsuit against IPI.

The request stems from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. completely cutting off the electricity to the workers' barracks last month. In addition, the workers still have not received any back pay from IPI. Unofficial sources say IPI is behind payroll by about 15 weeks.

Özcan Genç, Hasan Gökçe, and Süleyman Köş requested an entry of default after IPI failed to file a response or defend within the time permitted by court rules. Miller said IPI was served with the summons and complaint on Nov. 23, 2020.

Genc, Gokce, and Kos filed the complaint on behalf of themselves and other similarly situated H-2B workers who were recruited from Turkey in 2019. The plaintiffs are seeking a Fair Labor Standards Act certification of collective action from the federal court.

According to the complaint, the plaintiffs said that IPI promised the Turkish workers that it would hire a cook who could prepare the kind of food suited to them. They were also promised above-minimum wage, substantial overtime pay, and roundtrip tickets.

However, the workers said the meals IPI gave them were food that were "practically inedible" for Turkish people so they ended up buying their own food and cooking for themselves. It was not immediately clear if their opposition to Chinese food was for other than the reason they cited in the complaint.

Aside from IPI allegedly breaking its promise to hire a cook that specializes in Turkish food, the Turkish workers ultimately had to borrow

money from acquaintances for their travel costs and other expenses.

The group stated they also weren't paid the wages they were promised.

The plaintiffs said their work hours were drastically cut and all overtime work was eliminated since June. Delay in payrolls started on June 19.

IPI allegedly did not provide them pay stubs so they did not see the deductions made on their salaries.

In addition, health insurance premiums were allegedly deducted from their paycheck, but when they got sick and went to the Commonwealth Health Center they were told that their health insurance coverage had been suspended for non-payment of premiums.

When the workers stopped work on Sept. 11 for three weeks in protest, they said IPI stopped providing them with drinking water and internet services at their barracks and also stopped their access to company vehicles in October.

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# CUC raises January FAC due to global fuel price increase

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has been notified by Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc. that there has been an increase in the average international fuel oil prices which will affect the Fuel Adjustment Charge.

As a result, the current FAC rate of \$0.11165 per kWh has increased to \$0.13585 per kWh effective Jan. 1, 2021. Residential customers who use 500 kWh of power per month will pay approximately \$12.10 more in their monthly

billing.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC electric kWh rate, which is used to purchase fuel. The second component is the CUC base rate, which is used to fund operations, projects, and

debt service. This base rate has not been increased since April 17, 2014.

CUC is required, pursuant to an order previously issued by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, to adjust (up or down) the FAC pass-through rate when

the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing equals or exceeds a 4.5 percent differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel used in the calculation of the current FAC rate.

CUC first instituted the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause in 2009 to recover fuel

and fuel related costs, a system also used by power providers in Guam and the Virgin Islands. In May 2015, the CPUC authorized CUC to change the name of LEAC to FAC to provide customers a more accurate description of the electric rate. **(PR)**

## USCIS extends transitional parole for long-term resident status applicants

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced Thursday that it will automatically extend parole, and employment authorization, if applicable, for parolees who timely applied for CNMI long-term resident status.

This specific extension of parole applies only to current parolees who timely filed Form I-955, Application for CNMI Long-Term Resident Status, and Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, and whose applications remain pending on Dec. 31, 2020.

USCIS will automatically extend their parole (and employment authorization, if applicable) without interruption through June 30, 2021, or the date that USCIS makes a final decision on the parolee's Form I-955 and Form I-765, whichever is earlier.

The CNMI long-term resident status was created by the Northern Mariana Islands

Long-Term Legal Residents Relief Act (Public Law 116-24), signed into law on June 25, 2019. The new law specifically gave the Department of Homeland Security the discretion to authorize parole, with work authorization, for these aliens during the time period needed to implement the new law. USCIS has previously extended this parole twice, once on June 17, and then again on Aug. 11.

For eligible parolees whose timely filed Form I-955 and Form I-765 remain pending on Dec. 31, and who have an Employment Authorization Document, or EAD, if applicable, expiring on or before Dec. 31, the following documentation will serve as evidence of identity and work authorization for Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, purposes until June 30, 2021, (or the date that USCIS makes a final decision on their long-term resident status application, whichever is earlier):

■ A copy of this web alert; Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document, bearing category code "C-11" with an expiration date on or before June 29, 2020; and

■ Evidence that the alien filed Form I-955 and Form I-765 on or before Aug. 17, 2020. This may be a copy of Form I-797C, Notice of Action, reflecting that the parolee has filed Form I-765 requesting the classification ("class") code of (c)(37), or if unavailable, a copy of the alien's Form I-955 and Form I-765 with a mail receipt.

Eligible aliens had 180 days, until Aug. 17, 2020, to apply for CNMI long-term resident status. USCIS announced the Aug. 17 deadline when it opened the application period on Feb. 19, 2020. If USCIS denies a parolee's Form I-955 and Form I-765, their parole status (and employment authorization, if applicable) will end and they must depart the CNMI. **(PR)**

## Gold Mantis finalizes settlement with workers who alleged labor violations

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**  
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REPORTER

Gold Mantis Construction Decoration (CNMI) LLC has come to a settlement with the seven construction workers who are suing them for alleged labor violations.

In a status report it filed with the U.S. District Court for the NMI, Gold Mantis said that it has reached a settlement with the seven construction workers. Gold Mantis also asked the court to vacate the status conference in the case that is set for Jan. 11.

In response, District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona ordered Gold Mantis to file a stipulation for dismissal pursuant to the party's report that they are in the final stages of a settlement agreement with the seven construction workers.

Manglona also issued an order vacating the Jan. 11 hear-

ing and scheduled a Jan. 25 status conference ordering the parties to file their stipulation of dismissal by Jan. 21.

She added that Gold Mantis can suggest a new status conference date to

allow for the completion of negotiations.

Back on Nov. 25, the District Court for the NMI ordered Gold Mantis to provide a certification of compliance with all discovery orders by Dec. 28.

Since the order was issued, Tiberius Mocanu, who represents Gold Mantis, said the parties have reached a settlement and are in the final stages of finalizing and executing a settlement agreement.

According to Saipan Tribune archives, back in November, Manglona found Gold Mantis in contempt of



**Manglona**

court and imposed a \$2,000 fine per day for violating her discovery order.

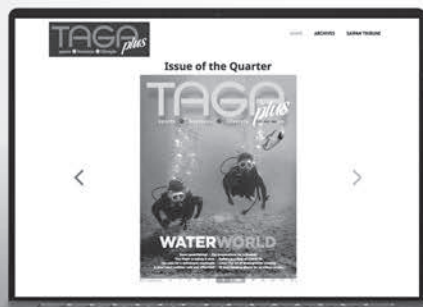
Manglona previously ordered Gold Mantis to answer in writing why the court should not treat its noncompliance as contempt of court, and why the court should not impose a civil contempt sanction requiring Gold Mantis to pay a \$2,000 daily fine from the time all discovery and affidavits were to be produced.

The workers—Tianming Wang, Dong Han, Yongjun Meng, Liangcai Sun, Youli Wang, Qingchun Xu, and Duxin Yan—sued Imperial Pacific International, (CNMI) LLC and its subcontractors Gold Mantis, and MCC International Saipan Ltd. Co. over various violations, including human trafficking.

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## PUA

From Page 1

sulted in long lines and lengthy wait times, plus delays in receiving their benefits.

In a 13-page report that minority lawmakers generated from the feedback that they received from their constituents on the CNMI's implementation of the PUA and FPUC programs, they identified 11 primary issues that people complained about, including frustrations with extremely long lines and wait times in excess of six hours to receive any service, especially during the earlier months of implementation of the PUA program.

Minority lawmakers shared the report Wednesday with Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente.

The other issues that the lawmakers highlighted in their report are payment delays and discrepancies, poor communications and lack of transparency, need for more training for Labor staff and a better casework management system, no priority of service for veterans, and inconsistent determinations of "qualified alien."

The other issues include confusing forms and filing process, online portal glitches and lock-outs, teleworking claimants and off-island bank accounts in limbo, data entry errors and abrupt switches to paper checks, and devastating impacts of PUA delays on constituents' lives.

House minority floor leader Rep. Christina Sablan (D-Saipan) signed the report. The other signatories are Reps. Franklin Babauta (Ind-Saipan), Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), Richard Lizama (D-Saipan), Sheila Babauta (D-Saipan), and Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota).

The lawmakers said they collected the concerns through emails and online surveys from nearly 200 respon-

dents; listening session with a group of seven PUA claimants last Nov. 17; a forum organized by PUA claimants and labor advocates last Nov. 24 that was attended by 50 people; oral and written testimonies at a town hall held last Dec. 9 that was attended by over 200 people; and more than 100 individual casework files.

The lawmakers told Benavente that they are hoping that the feedback is helpful in improving the management and implementation of the PUA and FPUC programs in order to deliver services as quickly as possible to people in need.

The lawmakers said they believe that a thorough and independent audit of the system is warranted to identify and resolve the issues that are causing errors, delays, and frustration, especially as thousands of people still await full payments of their unemployment benefits.

Such audit is needed, they said, as additional federal unemployment assistance has been extended beyond December 2020, and as the Legislature considers establishing a CNMI unemployment insurance program.

On the issue of disorganized operations, the lawmakers said that when Labor began scheduling appointments, constituents observed that names would be called from rosters, but not at the actual times of appointments, and appointment backlogs required people to come back again and again.

Many expressed dismay at the lack of any public restrooms, despite the high volume of people waiting in line for hours at Labor, including senior citizens, people with sensitive health conditions, and individuals with children.

On the payment delay and discrepancies issue, constituents reported long delays in receiving benefit payments, with some indicating that they have not received any payments at all since filing their applications in June.

On poor communications and lack of transparency, numerous constituents expressed frustration that they were frequently unable to get through Labor by phone.

With respect to the need for more training and better casework management, constituents said that, in general, Labor staff need more training and sup-

port in order to be able to effectively assist people with their claims.

Pertaining to lack of priority of service for veterans, military veterans who have applied for PUA said that, although they have been told by Labor staff that, as veterans, they are entitled to priority of service, they have not actually been given priority at all.

On inconsistent determination of "qualified alien," numerous constituents with C-11 immigration status reported inconsistencies in Labor's determination of their eligibility as qualified aliens for PUA.

With regard to confusing forms and filing process issue, constituents said it would have been helpful if Labor issued clear and accurate guidance and had trained staff who were able to assist claimants in navigating the application process.

Constituents reported that they found the PUA website difficult to navigate and the portal "unstable," especially in the beginning of the PUA program, freezing midway through the application process, or deleting supporting documents that

were submitted online.

Constituents also reported that their PUA benefits were withheld or delayed because they did not have on-island bank accounts.

With respect to data entry errors and abrupt switches to paper checks, constituents complained that errors in data entry by Labor staff, especially errors in bank account and routing numbers resulted in direct deposits being rejected at their banks and, in some cases, of funds in their bank accounts being frozen for weeks until they were

finally, after weeks or follow-up, able to get written explanations from Labor to their banks to resolve the matter.

Constituents reported experiencing food insecurity, being evicted from their homes or threatened with eviction, getting utilities disconnected, losing phone and internet service, being forced to withdraw from college classes, and having their vehicles repossessed by banks, as a result of protracted periods of unemployment and delays in the release of PUA benefits.



Benavente

## RIAMAYA

From Page 1

According to the Commonwealth Health Center midwife Sherry DeVries, the Semens-Nartin couple was the only couple that was admitted last Jan. 1.

Riamaya Nollina, the second child of Semens and Nartin, was born at 10:42am on Jan. 1 and weighed in at 6 lbs and 75 ounces. She was the only one born last Jan. 1.

"We were thinking there wasn't going to be a New Year's baby, so we didn't have any patients yesterday (Dec. 31), and she is our only patient so far today (Jan. 1)," said DeVries. Semens was admitted to the hospital at 7am and gave birth nearly four hours later.

Nartin is very proud to be the father of a New Year baby. In fact, he had predicted and was very confident that Semens would give birth on New Year's Day, which is a day earlier than her expected delivery date of Jan. 2. Semens stated that she

feels very blessed to have Riamaya on New Year's.

Fortunately, even with COVID-19 protocols, Nartin was able to be in the room with Semens as she was giving birth. Semens stated that the difference between her first and second child is that the contractions were worse this time.

Mothers giving birth on New Year's Day have a choice whether they want the media to reveal the baby or not. According to Nartin, this was the only time they had to sign consent forms after Semens gave birth.

DeVries stated that there were no complications during the delivery, and that baby Riamaya came out crying right away. "The baby was born in the water bag, which is doesn't happen very often. It's a little girl, so it's good luck for her life, so it's very special," she said.

According to various articles, a woman can give birth to a baby without the water breaking first, which is extremely rare—about 1 in 80,000 births.

## COVID-19

From Page 1

immediate contacts of the new confirmed cases, including passengers on the same flight.

In related news, a total of 2,709 individuals have already been vaccinated in the CNMI and CHCC expects to add a little over 200 more who have already been registered.

"We are expecting more vaccines, but until we see the shipping manifest, we'll be making an announcement on when we're going to be doing more vaccines for the first dose," said CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña, speaking at a radio news briefing last Dec. 31.

She confirmed that they are working on plans to get the doses to Tinian, and as well as the second doses.

With news that there is a new COVID-19 strain, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres stated in the same radio briefing that the administration, CHCC, and the COVID-19 Task Force have been closely monitoring reports about the new strain, and that they are concerned about the different strains and how strong it is. He emphasizes that, with the presence of a new, stronger strain, it is important that everyone in the community gets vaccinated.

According to the Associated Press, the first reported U.S. case of the COVID-19 variant has been discovered in Colorado. The variant was found in a man in his 20s who is in isolation southeast of Denver in Elbert County

and has no travel history, state health officials said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, new variants of a virus are expected to occur over time, and sometimes new variants emerge and disappear. Other times, new variants emerge and start infecting people.

CDC stated that the multiple variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have been documented in the United States and globally during this pandemic. Also, this variant seems to spread more easily and quickly than other variants. Currently, there is no evidence that it causes more severe illness or increased risk of death.

### COVID-19 in Guam

The Joint Information Center was notified that Guam's 123rd COVID-19-related fatality happened at the Guam Memorial Hospital last Jan. 2 at approximately 11:50am. The patient was a 68-year-old male with underlying conditions, and was admitted to GMH on Dec. 14, and was a known positive.

Guam's 122nd COVID-19-related fatality occurred at the Guam Regional Medical City last Dec. 31 at approximately 2:37am. The patient was a 52-year-old female with underlying conditions, and was admitted to GRMC last Nov. 13 and tested positive upon admission.

To date, Guam has a total of 7,326 COVID-19 cases with 123 deaths, 156 cases in active isolation, and 7,047 not in active isolation.

## CHECKS

From Page 1

is at \$600 at the moment," said Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig during a radio news briefing Wednesday. He said the U.S. Senate did not allow last Tuesday a vote to increase the stimulus from \$600 to \$2,000, as had been endorsed by President Donald J. Trump.

"So we're still rolling out and going for the \$600 as it is passed into law," Atalig said.

He disclosed that he and his team at DOF had a conference call with their partners at the Internal Revenue Services and they expected to submit their implementation plan to the IRS by the end of that day, Wednesday, and have IRS approve the plan.

"Keep in mind the stimulus checks are processed differently here in territories...unlike in the U.S. mainland where IRS directly submits and sends payments to the taxpayers," Atalig said.

In the CNMI and other territories, he said, the territories must submit an implementation plan on how they're going to distribute the stimulus checks.

Atalig noted that Finance had a "very successful" implementation program and rollout in the first stimu-

lus CARES Act distribution. He said they are just updating some of the challenges and some of the lessons learned that they had in their plan to be implemented in the second rollout.

Atalig said he expects the distribution of the second stimulus checks to be a lot smoother. "I think more people are informed on the challenges that we had in the early stages of rolling out the stimulus here in the CNMI," he said.

Atalig said they anticipate three to four weeks from last Wednesday to get things done, so they are looking at the end of January to be able to roll out.

"Keep in mind we have to wait for the implementation plan to be accepted and approved by IRS. Once that is approved, we await for the transfer of funds to us," he said.

Atalig said their initial plan will be to just submit and upload the distribution to those that have fair, clean tax returns on the first list by using 2018 data.

Atalig said there are differences in different taxpayers income between 2018 and 2019 and so those are the things that they need to iron out.

"However, those that have clean tax returns and pretty much not much of a big change within their 2018 and 2019 tax returns will probably get their stimulus checks right away, as soon as we receive the funds from

IRS," he said.

Atalig said they expect IRS to review and approve their implementation plan in the next 10 days.

He expects the stimulus funds in the second round to amount to about \$47 million.

In the first round, Atalig said, they distributed over \$58 million. "Those are the estimates we have from [the Division of] Revenue and Tax, which we are going to be submitting to IRS today [Wednesday]," he said.

Atalig said that, based on the first stimulus, they received the funds about three to four weeks after the passage of the stimulus bill. "And so the timeframe would be at the end of January. We will be probably distributing our stimulus checks by the end of January [or] early February, and continue until we've submitted everything to all our taxpayers," he added.

Trump signed last week the \$900-billion pandemic relief package that will provide cash to businesses and individuals. The bill includes \$600 checks for Americans who earn less than \$75,000 per year. The massive bill also includes \$1.4 trillion to fund U.S. government's operations through September 2021.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said last week that he wants to get the stimulus funds out to people as soon as possible.



# CNMI organization for NGOs receives three-year ANA grant

The Marianas Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations has been awarded a grant of \$682,485 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Native Americans for the Lemmai-Mei Nonprofit Incubator Project.

The three-year grant period began

on Sept. 30, 2020, and will end on September 29, 2023.

MANGO is an umbrella organization for the CNMI's nonprofit organizations. Its Lemmai-Mei Nonprofit Incubator Project will help 25 native nonprofit organizations receive incubator services to improve their

sustainability. Lemmai-Mei is a hybrid phrase of the Chamorro word for breadfruit ("lemmai") and the Carolinian word for breadfruit ("mei").

Breadfruit is considered a staple food throughout Oceania. Also, the tree's leaves, roots, and sap have medicinal uses, and both the sap and the wood are used in canoe building. Just as the breadfruit sustains and supports islanders throughout Oceania, so will the Lemmai-Mei Project sustain and support CNMI Native nonprofits that provide services to the community. In discussions with the management and staff of native nonprofits, MANGO learned that a lack of business training and writing skills was cited as a major weakness in nonprofit organizations. This was supported by the 2020 MANGO Nonprofit Organizational Needs Survey showed that many organizational capacity needs are in areas that require business training and experience, such as, leadership, management operations, data evaluation, and finance. The Lemmai-Mei Project will provide training and support in six areas: establishing a nonprofit, board training, sustainability, strategic planning, managing a nonprofit, and financial management. The long-term goal of the project is for all CNMI native nonprofit organizations to have the resources necessary to build capacity and produce sustainable programs for the community that they serve.

"Our survey revealed that 55% of

all registered CNMI nonprofits are inactive and half of those that remain active may not have the resources necessary to sustain themselves for the long-term," said Maisie Tenorio, MANGO board of directors chairperson. "MANGO was created to provide support to the nonprofits of the CNMI. Our success as an organization means nonprofits in our community have the capacity, training, and support they need are able to provide services to our people far into the future. We are thankful for the Administration for Native Americans for funding this project."

To learn more about the Lemmai Mei Project or MANGO, visit the MANGO website: [www.mangocnmi.org](http://www.mangocnmi.org). Memberships are free in 2021. **PR**

# UOG's Marine Lab turns 50

Fifty years ago—on Dec. 17, 1970—one of the world's first research facilities to specialize in the study of coral reefs was built at the University of Guam, the UOG Marine Laboratory.

Though a yearlong series of events to commemorate the Marine Lab's 50th anniversary were cancelled due to the prolonged pandemic, the Marine Lab team remains active and productive and committed to research and marine management.

An announcement will be forthcoming for an official 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration to take place this year.

## Positioned for new discoveries

The establishment of the Marine Lab made the University of Guam the only U.S. university adjacent to what is commonly considered the global epicenter of marine diversity, the Coral Triangle, encompassing the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea, a title UOG can still claim today.

The lab, by virtue of its location in what was then a poorly explored region of the globe, attracted several


of the best coral reef ecologists of the day, who contributed many firsts in coral reef research, including studies on outbreaks of the predatory sea star, the crown-of-thorns, and reef recovery after major disturbances. Faculty were also involved in the discovery and description of numerous new species and novel chemical compounds.

## Continued focus

Today, the Marine Lab's 10 faculty members and 25 graduate students continue to contribute important marine research regionally and nationally, with an emphasis on conservation and adaptation to climate change in Guam and Micronesia.


Current and ongoing research at the lab includes coral genetic connectivity across the Pacific, coral taxonomy and phylogeny, fisheries health, coral diseases, diver effects on coral reefs, taxonomy of coral-line algae, coral restoration, shark genetic connectivity within the Marianas, and reef adaptations to climate change. **(UOG)**





Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-20-007

FINA SISU WATERLINE REPLACEMENT

(W16-051)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Fina Sisu Waterline Replacement in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of a new main waterline and lateral service line; connection to the existing waterline; relocation of water meters from private property to right-of-way, installation of gate valve assembly, flush hydrants, fire hydrants, air release valves, existing laterals service tap relocation to new main waterline, restoration of existing asphalt concrete road, restoration of existing concrete slab on grade; and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

*This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.*

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **365 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **December 28, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies** must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “CUC-IFB-20-007s, Fina Sisu Water Line Replacement”, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 14, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 4, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Mr. Dennis Formalejo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email [dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org](mailto:dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org) and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).


CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO

Executive Director


MANNY B. SABLAN

Purchasing Administrator



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-21-005

A-2, A-5 AND A-6 SEWER LIFT STATION RENOVATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of the renovation of the existing A-2, A-5 and A-6 sewer lift stations, including but not limited to the renovation of the existing generator buildings or the construction of a new generator building, the renovation or relocation of the wet wells with all new pipings, fittings, pumps, generators, and other equipment and appurtenances. The project also includes the installation of a temporary by-pass system and the relocation of existing utilities to accommodate construction activities. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the sewer system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **365 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

*The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.*

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 16, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) copies** of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “CUC-IFB-21-005s, A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation”, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) January 6, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 18, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water & Wastewater, Engineer [nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org](mailto:nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org) and Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Senior Administrative Technician [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO

Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN

Purchasing Administrator



# USCIS provides Application Support Centers updates

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has experienced delays in scheduling or rescheduling Application Support Center appointments to collect biometrics. Current processing times are affected by several variables including demand and capacity at individual ASCs.

The information below may help you understand what to expect with your biometrics appointment.

## Safely reopening ASCs

USCIS temporarily suspended in-person services between March and June to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and ensure employee and applicant safety. As a result, it cancelled approximately 280,000 appointments. USCIS began a phased reopening of its ASCs in July, after installing protective screens and incorporated proper social distancing measures across 132 sites. Since reopening, there have been sporadic and temporary ASC closures for

reasons such as local stay-at-home orders, COVID-19-related cleaning and extreme weather. From July to September, ASCs were operating at below 50% of pre-COVID levels. By late October, it increased ASC operations to approximately 65% of pre-COVID levels.

## Current state

USCIS is working to safely maximize appointment capacity at ASCs and are also reusing previously collected biometrics to conduct background and security checks when authorized by law. Based on capacity limitations unique to each ASC, it has not yet rescheduled all cancelled appointments. USCIS is scheduling approximately 10,400 appointments per day. Approximately 1.3 million applications are awaiting biometrics appointments as of mid-December. Applicants should continue to wait for an ASC appointment notice or a Form I-797, Notice of Action, from USCIS indicating that their previously collected biometrics may be reused.

## Priority of ASC appointments

Biometrics appointments are scheduled based on the prioritization of benefit types, considering adjudication capacity and processing times. Within a benefit type, USCIS generally schedules appointments on a first-in, first-out basis. The wait time for appointments will vary geographically, based on capacity and varying demand at individual ASC locations.

## Biometrics reuse

USCIS is authorized to reuse biometrics under limited circumstances, and usually where it must verify an individual's identity and the case is otherwise ready to adjudicate. If USCIS will reuse biometrics for a pending application, it will mail a Form I-797 notice to the applicant stating that USCIS will be reusing the applicant's biometrics and that the applicant is not required to appear at an ASC. Not all applications meet the requirements for

biometrics reuse.

## Walk-ins

Because of COVID-19 facility constraints, USCIS cannot process walk-ins for biometrics collection except for military applicants

and their family members when the principal applicant is scheduled for an appointment.

Before visiting any USCIS facility, check the USCIS Office Closings webpage for the current operating status.

For more information about USCIS ASCs, visit the ASC information webpage. Use the online tools for help in managing your application and to track the status of your case. If you have questions that are not addressed in your appointment notice, you may connect with the USCIS Contact Center. (PR)

# More than \$3K available in financial aid for NMC's spring 2021 semester

New college students who are looking to access federal financial aid for the Northern Marianas College's spring 2021 semester are encouraged to file a 2020-2021 Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA. Students should submit a FAFSA before the spring semester starts on Jan. 19, 2021.

Qualified students can receive up to \$3,173 in federal financial aid for the spring 2021 semester. The Federal Financial Aid program is ad-

ministered by the U.S. Department of Education. Through the program's various types of grants, loans, and scholarships, the Federal Financial Aid program is the largest financial aid provider in the U.S.

FAFSA is available online at [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov) and can also be completed by using the myStudentAid smartphone app available for iOS and Android. NMC's school code is 015746.

To verify eligibility for Pell Grants, applicants can contact

the NMC Financial Aid Office through email at [fao@marianan.edu](mailto:fao@marianan.edu). Applicants can also stop by the Financial Aid Office from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Thursday.

NMC's spring semester offers virtual and online business, education, math, nursing, and science courses. For more information about the spring 2021 semester, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at [oar@marianan.edu](mailto:oar@marianan.edu) or visit [www.marianan.edu](http://www.marianan.edu). (PR)

# Yap dive resort announces grand reopening specials

**COLONIA, Yap**—Falling backwards from the side of a boat into pristine, warm ocean waters is undoubtedly a recurring dream for divers around the world. The award-winning Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers on the remote Micronesian island of Yap is preparing to make those dreams come true once again.

"We're offering not-to-be-missed packages for the moment when the island's borders open up to welcome visitors back again," said Texas-born and bred Bill Acker, CEO and founder of Manta Ray. In one of only 11 countries that are free of the COVID-19 virus, Yap's premier resort is on the bucket list of divers around the world. And now it's more affordable than ever.

"Although we don't yet

know when Yap's borders will be opened, we want to be among the first to welcome divers back to the sport we all love," said Acker. "That's why we're offering these great deals."

Manta Ray's grand reopening special offers for 2021 and 2022 include, for individual bookings for one to seven divers, three free nights when booking 7 nights/15 dives, 10 nights/24 dives, or 14 nights/33 dives. For groups of eight or more, get eight free spots for every eight paid divers. "That's right," said Acker, "that's not a typo. Pay for eight divers and come with 16!"

With over 9,000 dives in the waters of Yap, Acker is a member of the original class of SSI Platinum Pro Divers. As a PADI instructor, he re-

mains active in exploring new dive sites and teaching the sport to people interested in sharing his love for the ocean environment.

"It's been hard having to close our family-run resort for the last year, but we're ready and anxious when the border opens to welcome visitors back to this beautiful island," he said. "I've been having fun diving with my kids, but we all miss taking our guests out to plunge into the clear waters and magical canyons that surround Yap that this Texas Longhorn boy first discovered more than 40 years ago."

For more information, visit <https://www.mantaray.com/grand-re-opening-special-offers/>, follow Bill's blog at <https://www.mantaray.com/blog/> or go to @mantaraybay on Facebook. (PR)



The award-winning Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

# MCS student TED-Talks make significant impression

Last school year, Mount Carmel School launched the very first TED-Ed Club in the CNMI and has since made a significant impression on the main TED-Ed platform.

The MCS TED-Ed Club aims to support students and teachers who wish to discuss, debate, and explore ideas. The club provides a forum for students to develop, present, and record their own original ideas in the form of short, TED Talk-style presentations. Students in Kindergarten to 12th grade have been welcome to join.

Due to the pandemic, Mount Carmel School reformatted its student TED-Talks as pre-recorded video presentations that were published in April 2020 on YouTube. Since then, students like Larry Cruz, whose TED-Talk focused on the topic of toxic masculinity, and Aleia Santos, whose talk focused on new beginnings while living in paradise, have gained recognition from the main TED-Ed stage.

As a result, both Larry Cruz and Aleia Santos have been invited to participate in a virtual event series to celebrate, reflect on, and explore ideas with official TED staff members, including Bobby Nweke, the Speaker and Development director from TED conferences.



Mount Carmel School students Larry Cruz, left, and Aleia Santos. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Their participation is intended to help Cruz and Santos share new ideas with their peers as many students are seeking to discuss new and relevant topics on this platform.

"I haven't decided on one idea just yet, but I am continuing to sift through the topics I have," said Cruz. "I'd like to explore the way this pandemic changed the way students learn and the methods that teachers use to instruct their students. The pandemic has brought a variety of obstacles to our lives, especially as a student who had to learn without going to school. Another topic I've considered was the lack of exposure and education on racial issues and the way certain habits have become normalized here on island. I would like to focus on ways of changing such habits and becoming more

mindful of the impact of our actions."

Santos, who, like Cruz, is also a junior, said, "I can't decide what I enjoy learning about more: watching passionate speakers present wonderful ideas, or getting a peek into the process of developing those wonderful ideas. Hopefully, Larry and I will be able to get a glimpse of both and use what we've learned to improve our own talks and methods and share with our peers."

TED-Ed Club adviser Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero said, "It gives me immense pride that Larry and Aleia were invited to the TED-Ed Virtual Series Conference. They, along with all their peers, put so much thought, research, and intention into their TED talks that it's great they'll be exposed to new ideas to share with the rest of our team." (PR)



# Public warned of dangerous sea conditions until Wednesday

The public is being warned of the presence of dangerous Indo-Pacific man-o-war jelly fish in beaches on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota up until Tuesday afternoon. There is also a high risk of rip currents through Wednesday afternoon, while a small craft advisory remains in effect until Tuesday afternoon.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center's State Warning Point, a high surf advisory was in effect until 6pm last night. Hazardous

surf is expected along north and west facing reefs, while a high risk of rip currents is projected along north, east, and west facing reefs through Wednesday afternoon. Indo-Pacific men-o-war are expected along northeast, east and southeast facing beaches.

These events will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. Contact with Indo-Pacific men-o-war, alive or dead, can cause extreme pain.

Residents of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are advised to avoid venturing out near reef lines facing north, east and west. Large breaking waves can knock you down and cause serious injuries. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't

swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. Also stay out of the water, especially along northeast, east and southeast-facing beaches and reef lines. If men-o-war are not

found along the beach, they could still be out in the water. If stung, take out the tentacles, wash the wound with vinegar and then treat with heat pack.

Meanwhile, east winds 15 to 25 knots and seas of 8 to 10 feet are projected along Marianas coastal waters until 4pm Tuesday.

Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. Strong wind will make navigation difficult and large waves can capsize small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in hazardous conditions. **(PR)**

## Fee waivers for Jan. 7 NMC info session participants

Individuals who participate in Northern Marianas College's upcoming information session on Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021, will qualify to have their NMC spring 2021 admission application fee and placement test fees waived. The waiver represents a savings of up to \$75. The info session will be held from 5pm to 6pm at NMC's Olympio T. Borja Library located in Building O. As part of NMC's COVID-19 safety protocols, participants are asked to wear masks or face coverings when on campus.

The sessions will cover topics that include financial aid options, admissions, and other topics.

NMC's spring 2021 semester will begin on Jan. 19, 2021. A list of the classes that are offered can be found at [www.marianas.edu](http://www.marianas.edu).

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science

degree in education (emphasis in elementary education, early childhood education, special education, or rehabilitation and human services), bachelor of science degree in business management (emphasis in accounting); associate of arts degree in business, associate of applied science degrees in business administration (emphasis in accounting, business management, or computer applications), associate of arts in liberal arts (emphasis in education, health and physical education, and social work), associate of science in nursing, natural resources management, associate of applied science in criminal justice, and hospitality management.

For more information about registering for classes for the upcoming spring 2021 semester or to apply for admission, contact the NMC Office of Admissions and Records at 237-6768/6769/6771 or vis-

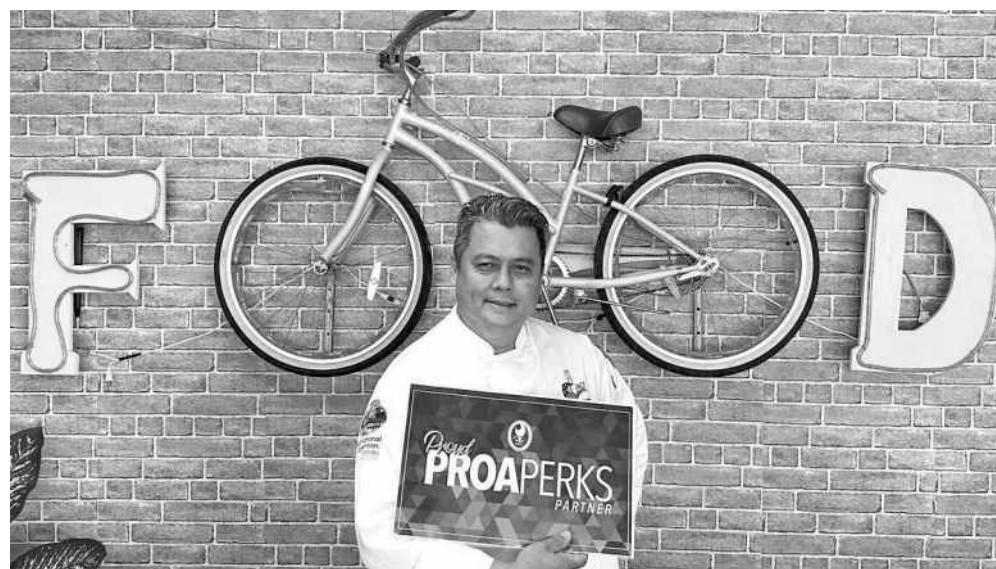
## Kevin's Cafe is latest NMC ProaPerks Partner

Kevin's Cafe is the latest company to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks Partner, joining many other businesses and organizations that provide exclusive discounts and benefits for Northern Marianas College students, employees, and alumni.

All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now avail of a free drink with any order from the Kevin's Cafe menu.

Other ProaPerks partners are 153 Restaurant, 4EVER CNMI, Alamo Car Rental, All Star Sporting Goods, Athlete's Foot, Boarderline, Bubba Gump, Caravan of Food, Docomo Pacific, Dollar Days (Garapan), Enterprise Car Rental, Ete Cafe, Fishing Tackle and Sporting Goods, Fork and Spoon, Garapan Restaurant, Great Harvest, Healing Stone Spa, Ice Island Coffee & Ice Deserts, Kiki's, National Car Rental, Natural Nail & Spa, NMC Bookstore, Latte Built, Salty's, Saipan Computer Services, Surf Club,

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kevin's Cafe is now a proud NMC ProaPerks partner. All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can avail of a free drink with any order from the menu.

Shirley's Coffee Shop, Tribe Marianas, Triple J Motors, The Pacific Supply, and Pena House Boutique.

NMC is in the introductory phase of rolling out the ProaPerks to alumni, students,

and employees. For more information, visit [marianas.edu/proaperks](http://marianas.edu/proaperks).

Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of the ProaPerks program and

take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include NMC alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing [proaperks@marianas.edu](mailto:proaperks@marianas.edu). **(PR)**

### TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION

Municipality of Tinian and Aguihan  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold its Regular Meeting on Friday, January 8, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Conference Room.

### AGENDA

- I. PRELIMINARY
  - a. Call to Order
  - b. Roll Call
  - c. Adoption of Agenda
  - d. Adoption of Minutes
    1. December 10, 2020—Regular Meeting
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- III. REPORTS
  - a. Chair's Report
  - b. Executive Director's Report
- IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
  - a. Licensing Matters
    1. Bridge Investment Group LLC — Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Casino License Fee
    2. Matsui Asia, Limited
- V. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. Presentation of Plaque — Chairman Patrick H. San Nicolas
  - b. Election of Chairman & Vice Chairman
- VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION
- VII. OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS
- VIII. MISCELLANEOUS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
- IX. ADJOURNMENT

<sup>1</sup> Public comments are limited to 3 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.  
<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

### Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514  
Email: [nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp](mailto:nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp)  
Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.net>

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairperson of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the Special Board Meeting is scheduled on Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Saipan. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance. Not more than ten (10) people are allowed in the conference room and social distancing will be enforced.

- I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  - a. Call to Order
  - b. Roll Call
  - c. Adoption of Agenda
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- III. CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
  - a. Divisional Update
- IV. OLD BUSINESS
  - a. CDBG-DR Updates
- V. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. CDBG-DR Homeowner Policies and Procedures
  - b. CDBG-DR Homebuyer Policies and Procedures
  - c. CDBG-DR Affordable Rental Housing Policies and Procedures
  - d. CDBG-DR Gap-Filler to LIHTC Program Guidelines
  - e. CDBG-DR Infrastructure Policies and Procedures
  - f. CDBG-DR Personnel Matters
- VI. LEGAL COUNSEL'S PENDING/ONGOING REPORT
- VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
- VIII. OTHER MATTERS
- IX. ADJOURNMENT

(Notes: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13 (a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/ Marcie M. Tomokane  
Chairperson of the Board

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"



### Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Office of the Executive Director



### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-21-009

#### Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced entities for a turn-key design and implementation of two SCADA systems and two additives at Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

*The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.*

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one package.

**One (1) original and five (5) hard copies** of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RFP-21-009, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **January 5, 2021**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 22, 2020** to Manny Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator via email address [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC's Power Generation Manager via email [richard.cano@cucgov.org](mailto:richard.cano@cucgov.org) and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO  
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN  
Purchasing Administrator



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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### EDITORIAL

## The science of gratitude

**W**hat does it mean to be grateful?

At its root, it's a dual action, a combination of appreciating the good things in life and recognizing that someone else is responsible for them.

Last year provided no shortage of pain and problems. There's no need to list them here, but for evidence of 2020's negative impacts on the American psyche, see the spiking anxiety depression rates around the country. Suicide, too, has become an even greater concern. The pandemic and its economic fallout in particular have pushed many to the brink and beyond.

That's why we must dig for gratitude in the new year. Researchers are uncovering links between feeling grateful and expressing gratitude and other positive emotions, including joy and optimism. This can also correlate with a greater sense of purpose in life; higher quality, mutually supportive relationships; and lower levels of negative emotions including shame and depression.

One study even reports that grateful people tend to sleep better at night.

This might sound like a magic bullet. Giving thanks and showing appreciation for others requires little effort after all. Who wouldn't want to sleep better and increase their happiness?

But this is where research suggests a sharp divide between an overall lifestyle that includes experiencing and expressing gratitude, and a deliberate effort to simply act grateful.

Studies have shown that performing gratitude exercises suggests that they actually have little effect on well-being, overall.

Suddenly altering one's lifestyle to include verbal affirmation for others will not cure anxiety or depression or miraculously alter one's mindset.

Rather, making a concerted effort to show gratitude for others in one's life can help generate a feeling of support. It creates a sort of network of goodwill.

Those relationships, multiplied, become our social fabric, badly frayed of late by politics and toxic media and the erosion of community and fraternal organizations.

A simple "thank you" to health care workers or anyone in your life who has done you a kindness may not help you start sleeping better. But it may make them feel seen, heard and appreciated. Supporting others by affirmation encourages them to support others in a similar manner. Furthermore, a deliberate effort to remember the good things in life on a regular basis, whether it is the roof overhead or the kindness of strangers, can and does have significant health outcomes in the long run.

Above all, remembering that all periods in time are temporary and shall pass should encourage us to look ahead and to do so with optimism. As we leave 2020 behind, difficult though the year was, there is always something for which to be grateful.

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## Rural downtowns were on the mend. Then came COVID

**F**rom October through Thanksgiving, rural Americans died from COVID-19 at almost twice the rate of their urban peers. Although that grim divide has since narrowed somewhat, it's clear that a pandemic once associated with dense cities will exact some of its gravest damage on the countryside. A recent report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture adds to a growing body of research showing that rural areas will be burdened by the effects of the virus—economic, medical and social—for many years to come.

Yet for all of their vulnerabilities, some of these areas were actually thriving pre-pandemic. And the crisis may even open new opportunities to address some of their long-neglected problems.

Before COVID struck, some rural areas had hit on a promising new formula for revitalizing themselves. In particular, non-metro counties in which recreation, such as tourism, was a dominant industry had the fastest rates of personal-income growth between 2010 and 2017. This was no accident: Over the past decade and a half, small towns have invested \$20 billion into downtowns, helping to create some 28,000 new businesses. The recipe for this kind of growth varies, but typically involves public-private investments in existing assets, such as classic Main Street buildings.

Rock Springs, Wyoming, is a good example. In 2005, it was a blighted mining town with little to recommend it. But that year, the city formed an urban renewal agency, which has since worked with local officials and companies to renovate old downtown buildings, offer grants to attract new businesses (via rental assistance and other perks), and chart development plans. The results have been strong: Rock Springs is now a tourism hub that attracted private investment of more than \$2.3 million between 2015 and 2019. For a city of less than 25,000, that's a major boon that has benefited an entire region.

Places as disparate as Emporia, Kansas, and Laramie, Wyoming, have had similar successes in recent years, with bars, restaurants, boutiques and tourist attractions dotting newly bustling Main Streets. Unfortunately, COVID has put a stop to much of that revitalization. According to the USDA, non-metro counties with recreation-based industries now have an average unemployment rate of 7%, compared to about 5% in those with agriculture-based industries. Even that disparity likely understates the damage, as informal businesses—such as part-time tour guides—lose customers.

That's bad enough. But there are worries that the slowdown could be especially damaging in these areas. For one thing, a long-standing dearth of mental health services in rural America

**By ADAM MINTER**  
Bloomberg Opinion

Adam Minter is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is the author of *Junkyard Planet: Travels in the Billion-Dollar Trash Trade* and *Secondhand: Travels in the New Global Garage Sale*.



means that an expected surge in anxiety, depression and other conditions related to joblessness may go largely unaddressed. The well-documented danger is that the newly unemployed become the long-term unemployed.

Fortunately, that's not the only possible outcome. Kelly Asche, a researcher with the Center for Rural Policy and Development in New London, Minnesota, points out that non-metro areas, many of which have been losing population for decades, have become more attractive to urbanites looking for open space during the pandemic, especially those who no longer need to commute to big-city offices. "Housing has gone nuts in rural spaces," he told me, "and that's a really good opportunity for rural areas to take advantage of."

Attracting long-term urban relocations would not only help sustain the progress made in creating vibrant rural commercial districts. It could also renew pressure on Washington to address problems—such as a lack of quality health care or widespread broadband—that were plaguing rural America long before the pandemic. That could help create a virtuous circle, made all the more urgent by the pandemic.

President-elect Joe Biden's administration can help spur this transition by supporting additional funding for rural downtowns via the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Local redevelopment agencies can offer help to small businesses seeking grants and technical assistance, such as help meeting new COVID-related health requirements. Congress should also consider establishing a rural development-finance institution that could seek out innovative, longer-term strategies for revitalization.

Such efforts could help reduce the immediate damage that COVID has inflicted on these areas. Down the road, they could also help bring prosperity and pride-of-place back to communities that are often afterthoughts. Over time, they might even help urban and rural Americans start to feel like neighbors again.



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

# No one predicted 2020. But how about 2021?



Once again, I offer my predictions for the year to come. But first I will perform the ritual that every prognosticator should: reviewing how I did at predicting the year now ending.

So before I get to my predictions for 2021, let's see how I did in 2020.

I predicted that most of the Democratic presidential candidates would condemn the Secure Act's limits on non-spouses who inherit retirement accounts. Evaluation: False. The unfortunate limits are still there—why not treat everyone who inherits a retirement account the same?—but they weren't an issue during the election.

I predicted that the number of surveillance cameras in the world would swiftly surpass 1 billion. Evaluation: Probably true. Nobody knows the number—recent estimates put it at close to 800 million—but the popularity of private surveillance devices for home and business needs to be factored in.

I predicted that due to insufficient appropriations, NASA would push back its 2024 target for returning human beings to the Moon. Evaluation: Partly true, partly false. The appropriation is much smaller than needed, but for now NASA is sticking to the 2024 target.

I predicted that the merger between T-Mobile and Sprint would survive judicial scrutiny. Evaluation: True.

I predicted that the New England Patriots would win Super Bowl LIV last February. Evaluation: False. I hereby declare an end to my tradition of picking the now-woeful Patriots every year.

I predicted that the rate at which Arctic ice is melting would continue to increase, and that climate activists would continue to argue against technological mitigation. Evaluation: Alas, both true.

I predicted a rapprochement between the U.S. and Belarus dictator Alexander Lukashenko. Evaluation: A brief glimmer of promise, but now looks as if the better term is false.

I predicted that the highest grossing film of the year would be "Wonder Woman 1984." Evaluation: Although the film is doing fairly well, all things considered, this prediction will turn out to be extremely false—but, come on, did you predict a global pandemic?

I predicted that a near-ban on vaping products would pass Congress and be signed into law. Evaluation: Mostly true. The 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act (you know, the one with COVID-19 relief) redefines nearly all vaping products as cigarette products, subjecting them to lots of new regulation.

I predicted that Virginia Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax, facing allegations of rape by two Black women, would decline to run for governor. Evaluation: Extremely false. The Washington Post reports that the scandals "have largely faded"—forgetting, perhaps, that it is usually up to the news media to decide which ones stay alive.

I predicted that the U.S. stock market would hit several new highs in the first half of the year, then fall in the run-up to the presidential election, before ending the year on a sharp upswing. Evaluation: Largely true, although the driver was not politics but news about the pandemic.

I predicted that the Houston Astros would defeat the Atlanta Braves in the World Series. Evaluation: About as false as it could be.

I predicted that journalists wouldn't apologize for their craven stupidity in asking whether cadets who circled thumbs and forefingers during the Army-Navy game were sharing white power signs. (As the Anti-Defamation League among others has pointed out, the OK symbol is almost always just an OK symbol.) Evaluation: True.

I predicted that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration would maintain its position that trace amounts of nitrosamines in some prescription medications were safe. Evaluation: Somewhat false. The FDA has joined other countries in setting daily limits for nitrosamines and has warned patients and doctors to be cautious.

Finally, to recapitulate my tongue-in-cheek prediction on the presidential contest, I predicted that the Democrats would flip Arizona, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin but the Republicans would flip New Hampshire, leading to a tie in the Electoral College and litigation from President Donald Trump. Evaluation: On the litigation part, I was right. I was also right in picking four states the Democrats would flip. I was wrong about the Electoral College tie, but that part was obviously farce.

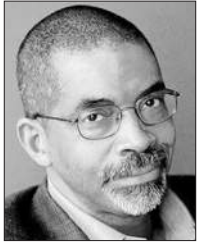
Now we come to my predictions for 2021. Do bear in mind that not all are seriously meant:

In January, President Trump will finally invite President-elect Joe Biden to the White House. Trump will even attend the inaugural, albeit with poor grace. After leaving office, Trump will become a resident of Florida. He will place his New York triplex on the market, but it will take over a year, and several price cuts, before it sells.

In his inaugural address, President Biden will be as charitable toward Trump as Trump was toward his predecessor, President Barack Obama. (Trump, as you may recall, was able to bestir

By **STEPHEN L. CARTER**

Bloomberg Opinion



Stephen L. Carter is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a professor of law at Yale University and was a clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. His novels include *The Emperor of Ocean Park*, and his latest nonfiction book is *Invisible: The Forgotten Story of the Black Woman Lawyer Who Took Down America's Most Powerful Mobster*.

himself to thank Obama for "gracious aid throughout this transition"—that is, for helping Trump—and that was it.)

Alas, within the first six months of Biden's administration, much of the progressive left will turn on him, labeling him too cautious and forgetting that it's a big and complex country which will be holding a congressional election in 2022. (Some predictions are easy.)

Other countries will begin to follow the lead of Japan, which is making ambitious plans to use GPS to track every visitor who enters the country.

The rich world's V-shaped recovery will strengthen but poorer nations will struggle with the pandemic's second wave, leading to more accusations that wealthy nations are most interested in vaccinating their own people.

In other COVID-19 news, at least three governors, having grown enamored of ruling by decree, will extend their states' declared emergencies through the end of 2021.

Due to pandemic restrictions, Super Bowl LV in Tampa, Florida, will be played before no more than 15,000 fans in a stadium that can seat more than four times that number. The Green Bay Packers will win.

A significant number of top jobs in the financial sector will move from New York to Connecticut, now that Darien seems again to make "loads of sense."

In climate news, additional measurements will tend to confirm recent speculation that the Antarctic ice sheet is much less stable than thought.

As the news media struggle to figure out how closely to scrutinize the new administration, "bothsiding" will become a popular verb—and your humble Grammar Curmudgeon promises to weigh in.

Despite the COVID-19 vaccine, audiences will remain leery of movie theaters, and at least one major chain will declare bankruptcy. Nevertheless, many more people than in 2020 will go to the movies—admit it, popcorn is never quite the same at home—and the top grossing film of 2021 will be "Fast and Furious 9," but nostalgia-seeking baby boomers will boost "Top Gun: Maverick" into the top three. The darling of the critics will be "The United States vs. Billie Holiday."

While we're on the subject, no later than summer of 2021, the board of governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, having read the handwriting on the wall, will vote to make permanent its "temporary" rule permitting Academy Award consideration for certain films that skip theatrical release and go straight to video.

In other pop culture news, to the dismay of the fan base, Grogu, better known as Baby Yoda, will not show up until midway through season three of "The Mandalorian." Bonus prediction: We'll see Kylo Ren's turn to the dark side.

Although the antitrust suit against Facebook will generate tens of millions of dollars for law firms, it will become increasingly clear that the case is thin.

The World Series will feature surprise teams from both leagues, with the Atlanta Braves defeating the Oakland Athletics.

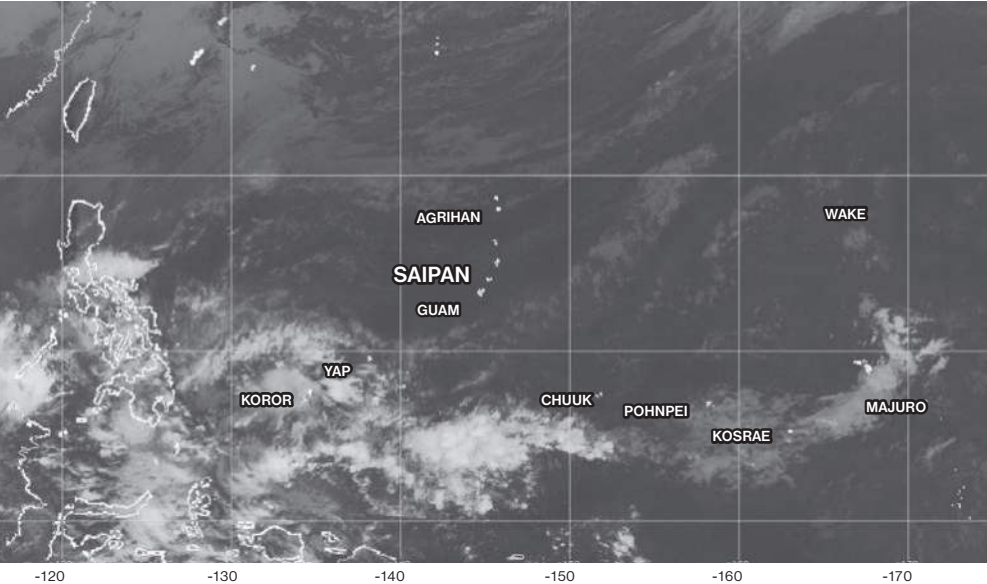
College administrators, having had a sudden transplant of backbone, will become resolute in standing up for faculty members under attack for taking unpopular positions. (Well, yes, one can always dream ...)

That's what I think will happen in 2021. Whether I'm right or wrong, I wish for all my readers a year full of joy and delight and thoughtfulness and companionship and love.



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
86°	77°	86°	77°	86°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



**PICTURE TIME: 1:18 PM, SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 2021**  
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Local observations on Guam indicate sustained trade winds of 25 mph with frequent gusts to 35 mph by noon. Saipan observations reveal sustained trade winds of 20 mph with occasional gusts to 30 mph. Therefore, issued a High Wind Advisory for Guam until early this evening and also updated the public forecast.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

## STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

### Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

### Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
  - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
  - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20

seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at [www.chcc.gov.mp](http://www.chcc.gov.mp) or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit [www.governor.gov.mp](http://www.governor.gov.mp) and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at [www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19](http://www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19).

### Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

### NEWS DESK

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MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly sunny	79 / 87°	
Palau	Morning clouds	79 / 89°	
Yap	Partly cloudy	80 / 86°	
Chuuk	Strong thunderstorms	81 / 84°	
Pohnpei	Partly sunny	80 / 84°	
Kosrae	Morning clouds	81 / 86°	
Majuro	Afternoon clouds	81 / 84°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:44 AM	5:59 PM
Tuesday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Wednesday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Thursday	6:45 AM	6:01 PM
Friday	6:45 AM	6:02 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:40 AM	10:42 PM
Tuesday	-	11:22 AM	11:38 PM
Wednesday	-	12:03 PM	-
Thursday	12:33 AM	12:45 PM	-
Friday	1:30 AM	1:30 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Morning clouds	65 / 75°	
Beijing	Sunny	19 / 50°	
Hong Kong	Partly cloudy	65 / 72°	
Honolulu	Partly cloudy	64 / 76°	
London	Partly cloudy	31 / 44°	
Los Angeles	Partly sunny	46 / 59°	
Manila	Morning clouds	77 / 89°	
Melbourne	Sunny	58 / 70°	
Miami	Morning clouds	76 / 83°	
New York	Overcast	43 / 47°	
Osaka	Mostly sunny	41 / 54°	
Paris	Partly cloudy	32 / 39°	
Pusan	Sunny	39 / 51°	
Rome	Partly cloudy	44 / 55°	
Salem	Morning clouds	24 / 32°	
San Francisco	Light rain	47 / 53°	
Seoul	Sunny	21 / 41°	
Tokyo	Partly cloudy	36 / 53°	
Washington, DC	Rain	46 / 51°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
5:01 AM	Low Tide	-0.36	
12:15 PM	High Tide	1.74	
6:08 PM	Low Tide	0.97	
10:37 PM	High Tide	1.47	

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6	UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri	1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri	1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri	1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri	1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri	1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri	1212	17:00	17:15	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
GUAM TO ROTA				2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable



# Business

## Docomo Pacific spreads holiday cheer with ARC Guam Chapter

**TAMUNING, Guam**—Docomo Pacific, regional leader in innovation, telecommunications, and entertainment, partners with the American Red Cross Guam Chapter in the Red Ball in a Box event.

### Red Ball in a Box

The American Red Cross is a non-profit organization whose mission is to keep the community strong through

disaster relief and recovery efforts, military family support, emergency preparedness, and lifesaving training and certifications. For the past 20 years, ARC hosts an annual fundraising event known as the Red Ball; a remarkable ballroom event consisting of live entertainment and an elegant plated dinner. Despite the pandemic, ARC was determined to continue with its signature fund-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Lisa Salisbury, Enterprise brand owner, Docomo Pacific, and Chita Blaise, chief executive officer, American Red Cross Guam Chapter.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guam Memorial Hospital members receive 10 Red Ball in a Box gourmet dinners in honor of American Pharmacists Month

raising event and created a safe and intimate experience called “Red Ball in a Box”. Boxes containing a four-course gourmet dinner, prepared by chefs from the Micronesian Chefs Association were delivered to each event ticket holder

Docomo Pacific continues to be a supporting member of this event through a Silver Sponsorship. The sponsorship came with 10 complimentary gourmet dinner boxes; which were donated to front-liners at the Guam Memorial Hospital

in honor of American Pharmacists Month.

### Gift voucher donation

Although this year brought with it many obstacles, we all did our part in pushing through together. ARC continues to be there for the community when disasters strike and Docomo Pacific continues to help non-profit organizations that support the community. A Docomo Pacific gift voucher was presented to AERC for a raffle prize during the virtual Red Ball in a Box event.

“The mission of the Red

Cross won’t stop for COVID and neither will we. Thank you to all our donors for believing in what we do. We won’t let you down,” said Chita Blaise, chief executive officer and executive vice president, American Red Cross Guam Chapter

To learn more about the American Cross of Guam Chapter, you can visit their website: <https://www.red-cross.org/local/guam.html>

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## GOP rebuffs Trump on \$2K aid, defense as Congress wraps up

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—The Senate wrapped up a rare New Year’s Day session with Republicans rejecting President Donald Trump’s demand for \$2,000 COVID-19 aid checks and overriding his veto of a sweeping defense bill, an unusual one-two rebuke at the end of a chaotic Congress.

Democrats tried a final time to push forward a House-passed bill that would boost the \$600 direct aid payments just approved by Congress to \$2,000 as Trump demanded for millions of Americans. Republicans blocked a vote, arguing in favor of a more targeted approach.

The rejection of Trump’s top priorities, along with the first veto override of his presidency, offered an unusual willingness by the president’s party to confront Trump, now in his final days in the White House after losing the November election to President-elect Joe Biden.

Trump lashed out at GOP leadership on Twitter. “Pathetic!!!” he wrote.

But Trump appeared more focused on his next battle to

overturn the results of the election during next week’s session tallying the Electoral College votes.

Congress is ending a dizzying session, a two-year political firestorm that started with the longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history, was riven by impeachment and a pandemic, and now closes with the GOP’s rare rebuke of the president.

Democrats vowed to swiftly revive the plan for \$2,000 checks after the new Congress is sworn in Sunday.

“President-elect Joe Biden has made clear that the pandemic relief bill that Congress passed is simply a down payment on the work that needs to continue,” said Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., the chair of the House Democratic caucus. “We’re going to continue to fight for a \$2,000 direct payment check.”

Tensions ran high as senators sniped over slogging through the holiday season at the Capitol.

Trump’s demands for additional aid upended the year-end COVID-19 relief and fed-

eral funding package, forcing his Republican allies to stand alone as Democrats embraced his push for more direct payments to struggling American households.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer tried, as he has all week, to push the proposal for a vote.

“This is it — the last chance,” Schumer said.

The New York senator said “the only thing standing in the way” is Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and other Republican senators.

The second-ranking Republican, Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, rose to object, saying the proposal was “not an effective way” to meet the needs of Americans.

That drew an angry tweet from Trump.

Trump said the state’s Republican Gov. Kristi Noem, an ally, should pose a primary challenge to Thune, who faces reelection. Noem has previously said she intends to run again for governor.

But presidential tweets that once sparked fear in Republicans may be losing their punch.

## Biden’s pick to lead Treasury made over \$7M in speaking fees

### REHOBOTH BEACH, Del.

**(AP)**—President-elect Joe Biden’s choice to be treasury secretary, Janet Yellen, collected more than \$7 million in speaking fees over the past two years from major financial firms and tech giants including Citigroup, Goldman Sachs and Google, according to disclosure forms filed as part of her nomination.

Yellen’s was among three financial disclosures turned in by Biden transition officials that were made public on Thursday by the Office of Government Ethics. In a separate filing, Yellen listed firms and banks where she had received speaking fees and said she intended to “seek written authorization” from ethics officials to “participate personally and substantially” in matters involving them.

Yellen was the Federal Reserve chair from 2014 to 2018. Her term was not renewed by President Donald Trump. She took in the speaking fees in 2019 and 2020.

Her selection by Biden to lead the Treasury Department

has been cheered by progressive Democrats, who support Yellen’s work as a labor economist who has long prioritized combating economic inequality. Since her nomination was announced, Yellen has pledged to work to fight systemic racism and climate change.

But receiving steep payments from Wall Street bankers and other powerful corporations could become an issue as her nomination works its way through a closely divided Senate. Hillary Clinton faced criticism from the left wing of the Democratic Party while running for president in 2016 for having received lucrative speaking fees at Wall Street firms.

A Biden transition spokesperson said Friday that, since leaving the Fed, Yellen has “spoken at economic conferences, universities and to business groups and financial institutions about her experiences and her views on what we can do as a country to build a stronger economy and increase our competitiveness.” He added that “this is not

someone who pulls punches when it comes to bad actors or bad behavior.”

Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden, ranking member of the chamber’s Finance Committee, said he expects Yellen’s nomination to “move forward quickly, with her hearing held before Inauguration Day” on Jan. 20.

“In the last few years, she has shared her views in a range of forums — congressional testimony, media interviews, speaking engagements, and opinion pieces,” Wyden said in a statement. “She’s been fully transparent.”

Also released Thursday were disclosure forms from Biden’s choice to be secretary of state, Antony Blinken, who detailed his work at a consulting firm he co-founded, West-Exec Advisors, LLC. They show that Blinken was paid more than \$1.1 million and has entered into an agreement, negotiated in October, to sell his equity interest in the firm, where he advised clients including Bank of America and Facebook.



# Nation

## In Georgia, Biden's presidency meets early defining moment



<sup>AP</sup>  
In this Dec. 15, 2020, file photo President-elect Joe Biden speaks at a drive-in rally for Georgia Democratic candidates for U.S. Senate Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff in Atlanta.

of the floor action. Conversely, a Senate led by McConnell almost certainly would deny Biden major legislative victories, as it did late in President Barack Obama's tenure, by keeping his agenda from even getting up-or-down votes.

Biden's team is keenly aware of the stakes. The president-elect will travel to Atlanta on Monday, the eve of the runoffs, to campaign with Ossoff and Warnock for the second time in three weeks. Biden's campaign aides have helped raise millions to boost the party infrastructure that helped Biden become the first Democratic presidential nominee since 1992 to carry the state. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will campaign Sunday in Savannah.

In his last visit, Biden called Republican Sens. David Perdue

and Kelly Loeffler "roadblocks" and urged Georgians "to vote for two United States senators who know how to say the word 'yes' and not just 'no.'"

Congressional makeup shapes any administration, but perhaps even more so for Biden, who spent 36 years in the Senate, plus eight as Obama's vice president and top congressional liaison. Biden leaned on that resume to pitch himself to the country as a consensus builder; he also criticized presidents' increased use of executive action to go around Congress and insisted it would be different in his presidency.

Even some Republicans are hopeful. Michael Steel, once a top adviser to Republican House Speaker John Boehner, a chief Obama foil along with McConnell, blamed Obama's Capitol Hill troubles on his personal approach to his fellow politicians. Conversely, Steel said, "President-elect Biden is a legislator by avocation, by training, by instinct, by experience in a way that former President Obama was not."

**ATLANTA (AP)**—Usually it's a president's first midterm election that reorders a White House's political approach and priorities. For President-elect Joe Biden, his most defining congressional election is coming before he takes office.

Two runoffs Tuesday in Georgia will decide which party controls the Senate and, thus, how far the new president can reach legislatively on issues such as the pandemic, health care, taxation, energy and the environment. For a

politician who sold himself to Americans as a uniter and a seasoned legislative broker, the Georgia elections will help determine whether he's able to live up to his billing.

"It's not that you can't get anything done in the minority or get everything done in the majority, but having the gavel, having that leadership control can be the difference in success or failure for an administration," said Jim Manley, once a top aide to former Democratic Senate Leader Harry Reid,

who held his post opposite current Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Both Georgia Democrats Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock must win Tuesday to split the Senate 50-50. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, as president of the Senate, would provide the tiebreaker needed to determine control.

To be sure, even a closely divided Democratic Senate wouldn't give Biden everything he wants. Senate rules still require 60 votes to ad-

vance most major legislation; for now, there aren't enough Democrats willing to change that requirement. So, regardless of Georgia's results, Biden will have to win over Republicans in a Senate where a bipartisan group of more centrist senators stand to see their stock rise.

A Democratic Senate still would clear an easier path for Biden's nominees to key posts, especially on the federal judiciary, and give Democrats control of committees and much

## More GOP lawmakers enlist in Trump effort to undo Biden win

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—A growing number of Republican lawmakers are joining President Donald Trump's extraordinary effort to overturn the election, pledging to reject the results when Congress meets next week to count the Electoral College votes and certify President-elect Joe Biden's win.

Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas on Saturday announced a coalition of 11 senators and senators-elect who have been enlisted for Trump's effort to subvert the will of American voters.

This follows the declaration from Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, who was the first to buck Senate leadership by saying he would join with House Republicans in objecting to the state tallies during Wednesday's joint session of Congress.

Trump's refusal to accept his defeat is tearing the party apart as Republicans are forced to make consequential choices that will set the contours of the

post-Trump era. Hawley and Cruz are both among potential 2024 presidential contenders.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell had urged his party not to try to overturn what nonpartisan election officials have concluded was a free and fair vote.

The 11 senators largely acknowledged Saturday they will not succeed in preventing Biden from being inaugurated on Jan. 20 after he won the Electoral College 306-232. But their challenges, and those from House Republicans, represent the most sweeping effort to undo a presidential election outcome since the Civil War.

"We do not take this action lightly," Cruz and the other senators said in a joint statement.

They vowed to vote against certain state electors on Wednesday unless Congress appoints an electoral commission to immediately conduct an audit of the election results. They are zeroing in on the

states where Trump has raised unfounded claims of voter fraud. Congress is unlikely to agree to their demand.

The group, which presented no new evidence of election problems, includes Sens. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, James Lankford of Oklahoma, Steve Daines of Montana, John Kennedy of Louisiana, Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee and Mike Braun of Indiana, and Sens.-elect Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming, Roger Marshall of Kansas, Bill Hagerty of Tennessee and Tommy Tuberville of Alabama.

Biden's transition spokesman, Mike Gwin, dismissed the effort as a "stunt" that won't change the fact that Biden will be sworn in Jan. 20.

Trump, the first president to lose a reelection bid in almost 30 years, has attributed his defeat to widespread voter fraud, despite the consensus of nonpartisan election officials and even Trump's attorney general that there was none. Of the

roughly 50 lawsuits the president and his allies have filed challenging election results, nearly all have been dismissed or dropped. He's also lost twice at the U.S. Supreme Court.

The days ahead are expected to do little to change the outcome.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, the top Democrat on the panel overseeing the Electoral College count, said the Republican effort to create a federal commission "to supersede state certifications" is wrong.

"It is undemocratic. It is un-American. And fortunately it will be unsuccessful. In the end, democracy will prevail," she said in a statement.

The convening of the joint session to count the Electoral College votes is usually routine. While objections have surfaced before — in 2017, several House Democrats challenged Trump's win — few have approached this level of intensity.

## California funeral homes run out of space as COVID-19 rages

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—As communities across the country feel the pain of a surge in coronavirus cases, funeral homes in the hot spot of Southern California say they must turn away grieving families as they run out of space for the bodies piling up.

The head of the state funeral directors association says mortuaries are being inundated as the United States nears a grim tally of 350,000 COVID-19 deaths. More than 20 million people in the country have been infected, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

"I've been in the funeral industry for 40 years and never in my life did I think that this could happen, that I'd have to tell a family, 'No, we can't take your family member,'" said Magda Maldonado, owner of Continental Funeral Home in Los Angeles.

Continental is averaging about 30 body removals a day — six times its normal rate. Mortuary owners are calling one another to see whether anyone can handle overflow, and the answer is always the same: They're full, too.

In order to keep up with the flood of bodies, Maldonado has rented extra 50-foot (15-meter) refrigerators for two of the four facilities she runs in

LA and surrounding counties. Continental has also been delaying pickups at hospitals for a day or two while they deal with residential clients.

Bob Achermann, executive director of the California Funeral Directors Association, said that the whole process of burying and cremating bodies has slowed down, including embalming bodies and obtaining death certificates. During normal times, cremation might happen within a day or two; now it takes at least a week or longer.

Achermann said that in the southern part of the state, "every funeral home I talk to says, 'We're paddling as fast as we can.'"

"The volume is just incredible and they fear that they won't be able to keep up," he said. "And the worst of the surge could still be ahead of us."

Los Angeles County, the epicenter of the crisis in California, has surpassed 10,000 COVID-19 deaths alone. Hospitals in the area are overwhelmed, and are struggling to keep up with basics such as oxygen as they treat an unprecedented number of patients with respiratory issues. On Saturday, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers crews arrived to update some hospital's oxygen delivery systems.



# Asia

## India tests vaccine delivery system with nationwide trial



AP

Health workers participate in a COVID-19 vaccine delivery system trial in Hyderabad, India, Saturday, Jan. 2, 2021.

**NEW DELHI (AP)**—India tested its COVID-19 vaccine delivery system with a nationwide trial on Saturday, as it prepares to roll out an inoculation program to stem the coronavirus pandemic.

The trial included data entry into an online platform for monitoring vaccine delivery, along with testing of cold storage and transportation arrangements for the vaccine, the health ministry said in a statement.

The massive exercise was followed by India's drug regulator recommending the emergency-use approval of two vaccines for COVID-19 — one developed by Oxford University and U.K.-based drugmaker AstraZeneca, and another by the Indian manufacturer Bharat Biotech.

Both the vaccines will now have to wait for final approval from the Indian regulator.

Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine manufacturing company, has been

contracted by AstraZeneca to make 1 billion doses for developing nations, including India. On Wednesday, Britain became the first to approve the shot.

The vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech is based on an inactivated form of the coronavirus. It is being made in collaboration with agencies of the Indian government. Early clinical studies showed that the vaccine doesn't have any serious side effects and produces antibodies for COVID-19. The company said in November that it was starting late clinical trials.

The government plans to inoculate 300 million people in the first phase of the vaccination program, which will include healthcare and front-line workers, police and military troops, and those with comorbidities who are over the age of 50.

The government is expected to initially lean on the vaccine produced by Serum Institute of India, which doesn't require

the ultra-cold storage facilities that some others do. Instead, it can be stored in refrigerators. This makes it a feasible candidate, not just for India but also for other developing nations.

Indian Health Minister Harsh Vardhan reviewed the preparedness for the vaccination drive at a government hospital in New Delhi on Saturday and urged the public not to pay heed to anti-vaccine rumors. "We will not compromise on any protocol before approving a vaccine," he told reporters.

Pooja Moriya, a health worker in the capital who will be one of the first to be inoculated, said hospital staff has had several meetings about the vaccine and how it works. "Our seniors have told us to not be scared at all," Moriya said.

India has confirmed over 10.3 million coronavirus cases, second in the world behind the U.S. More than 149,000 people have died from the virus in India.

ning a dispensary in Lahore as a front for financing militant activities. Lakhvi was a prominent figure in Hafiz Saeed's charity Jamaat-ud-Dawa, which is believed to be a front for Lashker-e-Taiba.

### China warns of retaliation for NYSE's delisting of companies

**BEIJING (AP)**—China said Saturday that it would take necessary countermeasures in response to the New York Stock Exchange's announcement that it would delist three major Chinese telecoms, in the latest flare-up of tensions between Beijing and Washington. The stock exchange said Thursday that it would delist China Telecom Corp. Ltd., China Mobile Ltd. and China

Unicom Hong Kong Ltd., with trading of the companies to be suspended sometime between Jan. 7 and Jan. 11. The move stems from an executive order President Donald Trump issued on Nov. 12 barring investment in publicly traded companies that the U.S. government says are owned or controlled by the Chinese military. "China opposes the Americans from abusing national security by listing Chinese companies into the so-called 'Communist China Military Companies' list and will take the necessary countermeasures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies," a spokesperson for the Chinese Commerce Ministry said in a statement.

# World

## AS CURTAIN DRAWS ON 2020

## New Year's revelries muted by virus

This New Year's Eve is being celebrated like no other in most of the world, with many bidding farewell to a year they'd prefer to forget.

From the South Pacific to New York City, pandemic restrictions on open air gatherings saw people turning to made-for-TV fireworks displays or packing it in early since they could not toast the end of 2020 in the presence of friends or carousing strangers.

As midnight rolled from Asia to the Middle East, Europe, Africa and the Americas, the New Year's experience mirrored national responses to the virus itself. Some countries and cities canceled or scaled back their festivities, while others without active outbreaks carried on like any other year.

Australia was among the first to ring in 2021. In past years, 1 million people crowded Sydney's harbor to watch fireworks. This time, most watched on television as authorities urged residents to stay home to see the seven minutes of pyrotechnics that lit up the Sydney Harbor Bridge and its surroundings.

In New York's Times Square, the ball dropped like always, but police fenced off the site synonymous with New Year's Eve to prevent crowds of any size from gathering.

Another of the world's most popular places to be on December 31, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, pressed ahead with its revelry despite a surge of infections. Images of masked health care workers briefly lit up Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower, before fireworks exploded in the sky over the building. Tens of thousands of people flooded the streets and squares marked out for social distancing were largely ignored.

Still, the pandemic robbed the night of its freewheeling spirit. Authorities implemented a raft of anti-virus measures to control rowdy crowds in downtown Dubai. At luxury bars and restaurants, music blared and people drank, but dancing was strictly prohibited.

The gleam of Las Vegas brought a similar crowd, with tens of thousands of people walking on the Strip by early evening despite a plea from the governor to avoid gatherings.

South Africans were also urged to cancel parties. Many instead lit candles as a way to honor health workers and people who have died in the COVID-19 pandemic.

In many European countries, authorities warned they were ready to clamp down on revelers breaching public health rules, including nightly curfews in France, Italy, Turkey, Latvia, the Czech Republic, and Greece.

"No one will be on the streets after 10 p.m. (Athens) will be a dead city to make sure no more restrictions are imposed," said Greece's public order minister, Michalis Chrisohoidis.

France's government flooded the streets with 100,000 law enforcement officers to enforce the nationwide curfew.

A few families gathered in Madrid's sunny central Puerta de Sol square to listen to the rehearsal of the traditional ringing of the bells that is held at midnight. They followed the Spanish custom of eating 12 grapes with each stroke of the bells before police cleared the area that normally hosts thousands of revelers.

"That's it, life goes on. Despite what happened we have to celebrate," said Cesar Pulido, 32, who celebrated in Madrid. "We have to eat the 12 grapes in order to ask 12 wishes like health, love, money, everything and good vibes."

As the clock struck midnight, fireworks erupted over Moscow's Red Square and the Acropolis in Athens, but the explosions echoed across largely empty streets as people obeyed orders to stay home.

From Berlin to Brussels, normally raucous celebrations were muted by the pandemic.

Even the British government, keen to celebrate the U.K.'s definitive split from the EU, ran ads imploring the public to "see in the New Year safely at home" amid a record number of newly confirmed cases. London's annual New Year's Eve fireworks display was canceled, but an unannounced display was broadcast before midnight, with tributes to health care workers, a reference to the Black Lives Matter movement and even a voice saying "you're on mute" in reference to a bugbear of virtual

work meetings.

In Scotland, residents normally mark the new year with parties and "first footing," where a home's first visitor of the year comes bearing gifts. The tradition is among the list of activities the government warned against.

"No gatherings, no house parties, no first-footing. Instead, we should bring in 2021 in our own homes with just our own households," Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said.

Many around the world looked toward 2021 with hope, partly due to the arrival of vaccines that offer a chance of beating the pandemic.

"Although this was a very difficult year, a year of many losses, I'm grateful to be safe, to follow the rules, to do my part," said Marilia Rafael, 33, who celebrated in Portugal, "and would like to ask that the next year may be better for all of us, may it be a year of hope, peace and love."

More than 1.8 million deaths worldwide have been linked to the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic.

Some leaders, such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel, used their New Year's address to thank citizens for enduring hardship during the lockdown and criticize those who defied the rules. Others, like Italy's President Sergio Mattarella, flew the flag for science, urging citizens to discard their fears about getting immunized against COVID-19.

"Faced with an illness so highly contagious, which causes so many deaths, it's necessary to protect one's own health and it's dutiful to protect those of the others — family members, friends, colleagues," said Mattarella, 79.

In Brazil's Rio de Janeiro, where official fireworks and celebrations also were canceled to limit the rapid spread of the virus, police officers braced for what promised to be a long night.

Rio officials decided to seal off Copacabana, where millions of people dressed in white usually gather on the beach to marvel at fireworks and attend large concerts. This year, between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. on Jan. 1, only local residents will be able to access the city's iconic shore, authorities said.

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### Pakistan arrests key militant on terror financing charges

**MULTAN, Pakistan (AP)**—Pakistan's security forces arrested Saturday an alleged leader of the militant group that was behind the bloody 2008 Mumbai attacks in India. An official with the Pakistani counterterrorism police, Shakil Ahmed, said that Zai-kur Rehman Lakhvi was seized in the eastern city of Lahore, on terrorism financing charges. Lakhvi is alleged to be a leader of the Lashker-e-Taiba group that organized the Mumbai attacks in 2008 that killed 166 people. Lakhvi was detained days after the Mumbai attacks but released in 2015 by Pakistani courts. Pakistani authorities allege that Lakhvi was run-



# Health & Wellness

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Feeling sluggish in quarantine? You can hop on a bike, perform some yoga, jump rope or follow fitness trainers who lead workouts online.

DREAMSTIME/TNS

has four generations of family members living with her. “My house was so over-crowded,” she declares, “but a few months ago, I made a bold decision that really helped.”

“I sat down with my husband and explained I wanted to use some savings to create a large family room. We’d find the room to do it by using our attached double-car garage. We got busy and the result is fantastic.”

One good decision can reduce your stress enormously. The result you want is this: You want a decision to improve your lifestyle in the future.

Here are several ideas for trying something new:

- Encourage your family members to pool their resources. For example, if your elderly parents need their house painted, ask younger family members to chip in time and money. Make the work seem fun, affordable, and doable.

- Figure out a simple plan to eat healthier. For example, cook larger batches and freeze food for later. Or, use clear zipper bags to create a healthy “salad bar” in your refrigerator.

- Get an exercise plan that works. For example, ride your exercise bike in front of the TV every night. Or, ask your spouse to walk with you for 45 minutes three afternoons per week.

- Finish your college degree online. Take a couple of classes and reserve weekends for extra study time. Use time that you’re at home during the pandemic to reach goals you’ll be proud of.

If you make up your mind to change something in your life, you’ll

be surprised how much easier your daily chores will get done.

When major problems get whittled down to size, you’ll feel your personal energy soaring. Your successful decisions will boost your self-esteem, too.

“I used to take a vote from several members of my family before I bought paint or tile for my house,” says a music teacher we’ll call Katrina. “I was fearful of being judged or making a mistake, so it was taking me years to remodel a house I’d bought from my cousin. However, last fall I decided to make more decisions on my own. I was amazed at how powerful I felt.”

Katrina got her three-bedroom, two-bath home in great shape within six months. And, she says, the best part was that she did not consult with anyone. She made all design choices by herself.

“I once interviewed the mother of eight children,” says a journalist we’ll refer to as Alana. “I wanted to know how she kept her house so nice, took care of all those kids, and worked part-time as a real estate agent.”

This super-mom told Alana that making one great decision after another, as fast as you can, is the answer. She shared her belief that most people dribble away their time by procrastinating. They bog down, feel lost, and quit pushing.

*Judi Light Hopson is author of the stress management book, Cooling Stress Tips. She is also executive director of USA Wellness Cafe at [www.usawellnesscafe.org](http://www.usawellnesscafe.org).*

## COOLING STRESS TIPS:

# How to get more done in less time

By JUDI LIGHT HOPSON  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Do you feel overwhelmed and tired when you think about your goals?

Maybe you’re working from home these days, and you have an extra

hour or two each day that you normally wouldn’t have.

But, despite this, you’re stuck.

You feel bogged down because your problems are piling up. Instead of making a decision to change something, you either talk yourself out of

it, or you allow someone else to talk you out of it.

Making good decisions faster will increase your output. You can get a lot more done if you take control of pushing past your fears.

A working mother we’ll call Gina

## Mayo Clinic Q and A: Managing high cholesterol with lifestyle changes

**DEAR MAYO CLINIC:** I recently had an annual well check with my primary care doctor and was told I have high cholesterol. I know it runs in my family, but I am 25 and thought I was eating well enough and exercising. I do not want to start taking medication. What does it mean to have high cholesterol? What can I do to improve my cholesterol?

**ANSWER:** Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in fat in the blood. Your body makes cholesterol in the liver, from breaking down foods that you eat. But when you have too much cholesterol, you may develop fatty deposits, also known as plaque, in your blood vessels. This can make it difficult for blood to flow through your arteries. Over time, the plaque can build up and break off, potentially causing a heart attack or stroke.

Diagnosing high cholesterol can be challenging, as often there are no signs or symptoms. Having a lipid screening blood test should be part of a physical for anyone over 20 to assess the risk of coronary artery disease. The test may be repeated every three to five years or more often, depending on family history, or if you have existing heart disease, diabetes or other conditions that may increase your risk of coronary heart disease.

When your health care provider evaluates lipids, he or she is looking at total cholesterol; HDL, high-density lipoprotein or “good” chole-

sterol; LDL, low-density lipoprotein or “bad” cholesterol; and triglycerides. Each is part of the total cholesterol number.

Risk factors for high cholesterol include poor diet, physical inactivity, smoking, obesity, diabetes and age. While you may eat healthy and exercise, genetics also plays a role. If you are African American, Latino or Asian American, research indicates you also are at greater risk for heart disease resulting from high cholesterol.

Patients, especially younger patients like yourself, can use a risk calculator to help determine the probability of a heart attack in the next 10-30 years. Although there are many calculators and numerous factors that determine a person’s risk, I believe having the conversation with your health care provider is important as you decide how to manage your condition.

Based on your risk and family history, your provider may recommend a coronary calcium score test. This is a CT scan of the heart to determine how much calcified plaque is in the heart arteries. This test can help determine if lifestyle changes alone would be recommended or if starting a medication is needed to reduce your heart attack risk.

As far as managing your high cholesterol, the first treatment for someone your age is behavioral lifestyle changes. The primary focus is

around physical activity—at least 30 minutes of activity daily—and modifying your diet.

What you eat affects your cholesterol levels. The biggest culprit these days is the consumption of trans fats and saturated fats, which are referred to as “bad” fats.

Trans fats often are found in pre-packaged products or items that are



Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in fat in the blood. High levels of cholesterol can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

DREAMSTIME/TNS

made with shortening or margarine. Examples include doughnuts and cookies, nondairy whipped cream and creamer, microwavable popcorn, fast foods, and fried foods. My recommendation is to eliminate these foods from your diet.

You also want to cut back on saturated fats, which often are found in animal products such as bacon, butter, eggs and cheese. Look at making small changes, which can have a significant benefit. For instance, consider swapping full-fat ingredi-

ents for low-fat options and substitute olive oil for butter.

You should not eliminate fat entirely, though. Your body needs dietary fats to absorb nutrients, make hormones and build cells. However, it is important to understand the differences between good fats and bad fats.

Healthy or “good” fats are mono-

unsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Good examples of these foods to add to your diet include olive oils; fatty fish; certain nuts, such as almonds, walnuts and macadamias; and avocados.

Omega-3 has been shown to reduce triglycerides, as well as reduce blood pressure and the risk of developing blood clots. In people who already have had heart attacks, omega-3 fatty acids may reduce the risk of sudden death.

Increasing the amount of soluble

fiber can reduce the absorption of cholesterol into your bloodstream. Five to 10 grams or more of soluble fiber a day decreases your low-density lipoprotein cholesterol.

Many cookbooks and recipes are online to help you adjust your diet. The important thing is to start making small changes now. I suggest patients strive for at least eight to 12 weeks of modifications before rechecking their cholesterol levels.

If cholesterol does not improve, it may be valuable to discuss medications. The most commonly prescribed medication is a statin. This blocks an enzyme that your body needs to make cholesterol, thereby decreasing the cholesterol in your body and stabilizing your numbers. Popular statins include atorvastatin (Lipitor), fluvastatin (Lescol XL), lovastatin (Altoprev), pitavastatin (Livalo), pravastatin (Pravachol), rosuvastatin (Crestor and Ezallor), and simvastatin (Zocor and FloLipid).

You and your health care provider will determine the right prescription and dose based on your personal situation. Typically, you would have your cholesterol checked three to six months after starting the medication.

High cholesterol is a challenge for some people, but your willingness to learn more and make lifestyle adjustments can go a long way to effectively managing the condition and reducing your risk for heart attack or stroke. (*Mayo Clinic News Network*)



# Life & Style

## Calamity? Anomaly? 2020 was a box office year like no other

By **LINDSEY BAHR**  
AP FILM WRITER

When the sun sets on the 2020 film box office, it'll be difficult to look at the numbers as anything but disastrous.

After five consecutive years

of North American revenues exceeding \$11 billion, this year they're expected to cap out at an almost 40-year low of around \$2.3 billion. That'll be down 80% from last year according to data firm Comscore. Globally, where mar-

kets have been able to recover more fully, ticket sales will likely end up somewhere between \$11 and \$12 billion. Last year, that total hit \$42.5 billion. But of course, 2020 is a year with a big asterisk.

"It's a year like no other,"

said Jim Orr, president of domestic theatrical distribution for Universal Pictures. "We've never seen this little business in this industry."

Outside of January and February, it's impossible to judge the year's box office by

pre-pandemic standards. Box office, in aggregate, is fairly predictable in a normal year. But when the theaters shut down March 20, that "all went out the window," said Paul Dergarabedian, a senior media analyst with Comscore. "The unpredictability became the constant."

Most North American theaters weren't open for six months straight through the summer season, which typically accounts for around 40% of the year's profits. For the past two years, the summer movie season has netted over \$4.3 billion. This year it brought in \$176.5 million, much of that from drive-in theaters.

"The drive-in became the hero of the summer," Dergarabedian said.

When indoor theaters did start to reopen in late August

and early September, it was at limited capacity and with limited product. Currently, about 35% of theaters are open in the U.S. and some of the biggest markets, including New York and Los Angeles, remain closed. Although there have been a steady stream of new releases, the blockbuster tentpoles have been few and far between. Some went to streaming services, others became premium digital rentals, but most simply retreated into 2021 and beyond.

Perhaps there is no more telling fact than that 2020 was the first time in over a decade without a Marvel movie. The Walt Disney Co.'s superhero factory has for the past two years topped the year-end charts with "Avengers: Endgame" and "Black Panther," and has regularly had two or more films in the top 10.

## Italy's Uffizi opens Dante anniversary with virtual exhibit

**MILAN** (AP)—Florence's Uffizi Gallery is making available for viewing online 88 rarely displayed drawings of Dante's "Divine Comedy" to mark the 700th anniversary in 2021 of the Italian poet's death.

The virtual show of high-resolution images of works by the 16th-Century Renaissance artist Federico Zuccari will be accessible from Friday "for free, any hour of the day, for everyone," said Uffizi director Eike Schmidt.

The drawings illustrate Dante's masterpiece, "The Divine Comedy," an epic poem in three parts recounting a pilgrim's travels through hell, purgatory and heaven.

Dante Alighieri is revered as the father of the Italian language. A Tuscan by birth, he died and was buried in the city of Ravenna, a three-time ancient capital located in the re-



This image made available on Thursday, Dec. 31, 2020, shows Ulisse and Diomede, the fraudulent advisors, one of the original 88 drawings that went with Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy by artist Federico Zuccari.

gion of Emilia-Romagna.

The pencil-and-ink drawings are in contrasting shades of black and red. They were com-

pleted during Zuccari's stay in Spain from 1586 to 1588, and became part of the Uffizi collection in 1738.

The drawings have only been publicly displayed twice previously, and then only a selection, owing to their fragility: in Florence in 1865 to mark the 600th anniversary of Dante's birth and coinciding with Italy's unification as a nation, and for a specialized exhibit about Dante in Abruzzo in 1993.

The drawings were originally bound in a volume, with each illustration opposite the corresponding verse in Dante's epic poem. The texts and scholarly comment will also be included in the virtual show, titled "A riveder le stelle," (to see the stars again), a reference to the celebrated last line of Dante's "Inferno."

Schmidt said the drawings are a "great resource" for Dante scholars and students, as well as "anyone who likes to be inspired by Dante's pursuit of knowledge and virtue."

## Murakami urges politicians to speak sincerely about virus

**TOKYO** (AP)—Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami says politicians need to help reduce public uncertainty and fear over the coronavirus and gain people's support by speaking sincerely about the pandemic.

Murakami, in a two-hour live New Year's Eve radio show, urged political leaders to "talk honestly from the gut" to the people to encourage their participation in slowing an upsurge in infections, which are

on the verge of getting out of control.

His comments came hours after Japan's capital announced its new daily cases soared to a record 1,337 on Thursday, up sharply from the previous high of 949 on Dec. 26.

"I think an essential problem with the coronavirus is our uncertain future, which is



**Murakami**

triggering a sense of fear, anger and escapism among people, which I think is the biggest danger," Murakami said in a conversation with one of two guests, Nobel physiology prize winner Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University.

"It would be difficult for the people to squarely cooperate with the (anti-virus) measures when

politicians are not communicating with messages" in words that can reach people's hearts, Murakami said, without identifying any politician by name.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and his predecessor, Shinzo Abe, have been criticized for reading carefully scripted statements prepared by bureaucrats at news conferences, often repeating the same phrases in response to questions asked by reporters.

## Trebek's last new 'Jeopardy!' episodes airing with a tribute

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—The final new "Jeopardy!" episodes hosted by Alex Trebek will air next week, with highlights that promise to be memorable.



**Trebek**

The first of the five episodes will air Monday and start with Trebek's "powerful message about the season of giving," producer Sony Pictures Television said in a release Wednesday.

The final episode, on Friday, will conclude with a tribute to the longtime and beloved host. He died of pancreatic cancer on Nov. 8

at age 80.

Trebek, who had been candid about his condition, worked up until 10 days before he died, soldiering on despite debilitating treatments and the disease's toll.

It was unexpected that the episodes taped in late October would be his final ones, Sony said. Trebek had been fighting the disease for nearly two years.

Veteran "Jeopardy!" champion Ken Jennings will take over as guest host starting on Jan. 11. A permanent host has yet to be announced.

## Son helps himself to contents of late grandfather's house

**DEAR ABBY:** My father passed away a few months ago. My brother lives out of state, so emptying the house has been up to me. Shortly after the funeral, my adult son (the only grandchild) arrived and loaded his car with all the toilet paper, paper towels, light bulbs, cleaning products, etc. He did it without asking, so I promptly had the locks changed. When I asked him about it, he said, "Grandpa doesn't need the stuff anymore."

After months of packing (by myself), we are now down to the furniture, and my son wants everything. He feels he's entitled to it. Rather than select one or two pieces, he is "gimme, gimme, gimme" and sees nothing wrong with this attitude. I didn't raise him that way, but he is that way now. What should I do?

**GREEDY OUT WEST**

**DEAR GREEDY:** Although at this point it's a little late, what you should do is finally say NO. Unless your father stated specifically—in writing—that your son should get everything, what he did is considered stealing.

**DEAR ABBY:** What the heck happens to men between the ages of 45 and 60? It seems the women they're after are all 15

to 20 years younger. I don't mean just for sex but for dating, love and marriage, too.

We middle-aged women are often overlooked because these middle-aged guys don't realize we are at our sexual peak and often hot as hell. And we're active in many interesting, fulfilling activities. By the time these men come to their senses, they are usually washed-up and impotent. Why is nature and society so cruel and unfair? How can I, as a sexy, active middle-aged woman, beat the odds? I do not intend to remain celibate and alone for the rest of my life.

**STILL FUN IN THE SOUTH**

**DEAR STILL FUN:** You can't change other people, but you can change the way you react to them. A way to "beat the odds" would be to stop focusing solely on middle-aged guys and consider dating men a bit younger who appreciate what you have to offer. Even if it doesn't lead to marriage, you could have a lot of fun in the meantime.

**DEAR ABBY:** We have a friend who often comes to us for advice, but never seems to take it. She keeps making the same mistake over and over again. How do we get through to her?

**FRIENDS WHO CARE IN UTAH**

## DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



**DEAR FRIENDS:** Candidly? Realize you can't get through to her because she's not really seeking advice. Rather than listening, she's venting. Because of the friendship, listen when she "dumps," but refrain from offering wisdom you know will be disregarded.

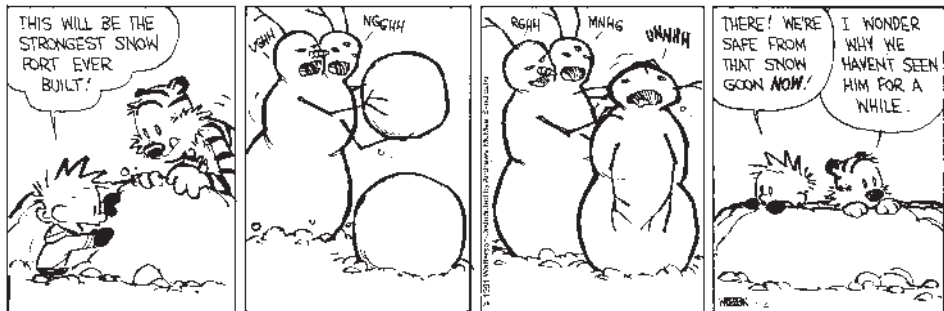
Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



## Garfield®

By Jim Davis



## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



## CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Pond growth

5 Legisla-tion

8 Ascend

12 "Spider-Man" director

14 Furry sci-fi critter

15 Most acute

16 Carrot on a snowman

17 Tempe sch.

18 Serengeti howlers

20 Rap star West

23 Over-confident

24 Nuptial vows

25 Salt sprinklers

28 Pod dweller

29 Harbor markers

30 Aachen article

32 Hair cleanser

**DOWN**

1 Ninny

2 — -di-dah

3 "Today" rival,

4 Orderly

5 Stead

6 Early hrs.

7 Deli sandwich request

8 Break a promise

9 Victor's cry

10 Slugger Sammy

11 Stretches (out)

13 Church area

19 Guffaws

20 Half a ton

21 Citrus drinks

22 Ancient mariner

23 Drives off

25 Imagined

26 Peruse

27 Shoebox info

29 College VIP

31 Prefix with natal

33 Stage com-ments

34 Sacred songs

36 Capital of Italia

37 Crib cry

38 Alike (Fr.)

39 TV's "Warrior Princess"

40 Innocent one

43 Med. plan

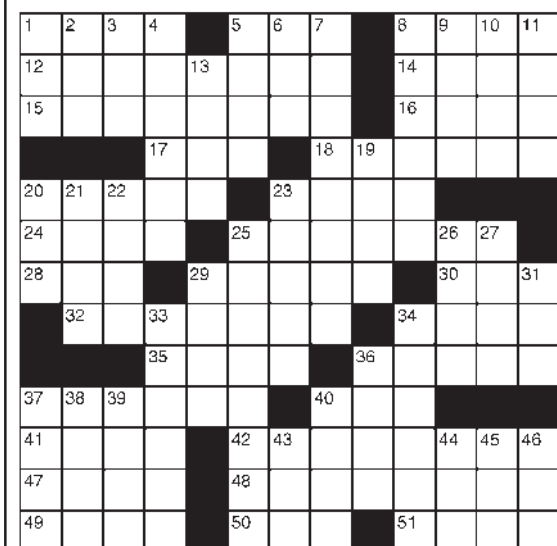
44 U.S. Army bases

45 Last (Abbr.)

46 Guitar master Paul

**Solution time: 26 mins.**

PUB	PEST	HEAL
ETA	URSA	ANTE
PECOR	NO	YES
KIFF	SIAMS	
BADGE	MATE	
ABRA	PALOMINO	
NEO	SANTA	DOG
ALPAC	NO	BENE
CODA	RENEE	
CHART	CHET	
LIDO	F	LIPINO
ALAS	NON	TAP
MOVIE	EDGE	YET



## STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

## CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Dot-Marie Jones, 57; Dave Foley, 58; Michael Stipe, 61; Patty Loveless, 64.

**Happy Birthday:** Take an innovative approach to work, money, health and legal matters. You are overdue for a change, and implementing techniques and skills to suit trends will encourage positive change and personal gains. Refuse to get bogged down with matters that aren't your responsibility. Concentrate on what will encourage you to do and be your best. Your numbers are 7, 18, 23, 28, 32, 35, 49.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Put your health and emotional well-being first. Don't share personal information or secrets that might affect your reputation. Chase your dreams instead of taking on someone's obligations. A physical routine will motivate you to stay in shape. \*\*\*

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Your desire for change will leave loved ones feeling uncertain. Rely on your gut feeling when it comes time to make a decision. Intelligence will help you pursue a position that offers a bright future and a chance to use your skills diversely. \*\*\*\*\*

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Be wary of gestures and compliments from someone likely to have ulterior motives. Get to the point, and find out what others want or expect from you. Don't participate in something that will have ramifications at work or home. \*\*

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Move things around at home to accommodate your needs or to approach your job in-

tuitively. You'll come up with a great way to be more efficient and successful. Make changes that will ensure fairness in personal and professional partnerships. \*\*\*\*

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Think big, but stick to the basics. You can incorporate all the bells and whistles at a later date when the timing is right and the funds are available. Share your vision, but stick to your budget. Don't mix business with pleasure. \*\*\*

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Change begins with you. Don't let uncertainty stagnate you. Pursue your interests and see where it leads. Picking up knowledge and skills is never a waste of time. Take whatever path feels right. You can always take a detour if necessary. \*\*\*

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** It's your prerogative to change your mind or try something new. You may not please everyone with the decisions you make, but you are the one who has to live with the outcomes. Do your best, forge ahead and pursue your dream. \*\*\*

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Slow down, observe what's going on around you and consider how best to use a situation to get ahead. Don't feel you have to make a change just because someone else does. Let your intuition guide you. \*\*\*\*

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** You've got more options than you think. Refuse to let anyone interfere with your plans. Do the work yourself. Maintain truth and honesty as you move forward. Don't jeopardize your health; take every precaution necessary. \*\*

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD  
IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Un-necessary purchases will leave you short of cash. A joint venture will not turn out as planned. Protect against financial loss, manipulative individuals and taking risks with your health. Stick to what you do best, and look out for your interests. \*\*\*\*\*



**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Do more research before implementing a change that can affect your income or a partnership. Find out where you stand and what's required; you can protect yourself from being taken advantage of emotionally and financially. Exercise will relieve stress. \*\*\*



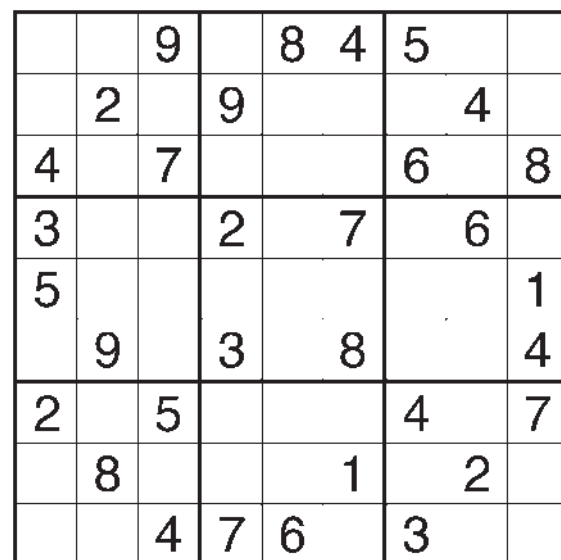
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Work alongside those who are willing to put out as much as you. Trying to please others by taking on additional responsibilities will leave you tired and unable to take care of your duties. Don't jeopardize your health or reputation. \*\*\*

**Birthday Baby:** You are genuine, helpful and understanding. You are quick-witted and persistent. Visit [Eugenialast.com](http://Eugenialast.com), or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

## SUDOKU

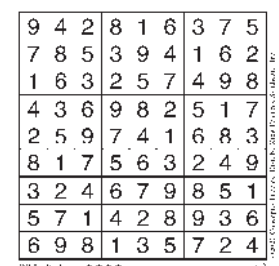
Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer



Difficulty Level ★

1/04

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## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

JEAN-GEORGES' RESTAURANTS

Solution: 5 letters

E E C P A S T R Y Y R R E P S  
D L R H J V P C U L I N A R Y  
B E E O E F A M O U S A E I (E)  
O L T G P F D S T R E N D M (N)  
I A A S A A A F R E N C H E (L)  
L N S H A N G H A I S A L A (D)  
E O T S G O C N D F P B L L S  
D S N E S S R E I I I T I M E  
R A L D K T S D E S S E R T S  
P E G E O R G E S H C H G L R  
S S C K O N A E T R B A E I U  
U A Y R C N C M E S R T M S O  
N O U S E C I P S P O A C H C  
E K A C A M E A T H I H E R B  
M E T T E L E M O M L U N C H

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1/4

Accessible, Adapt, Boiled, Broil, Cake, Chef, Cooks, Courses, Crêpe, Culinary, Dessert, Dine, Dinners, Dishes, Elegance, Famous, Fish, French, Georges, Grill, Herb, Hostess, Hotels, London, Los Angeles, Lunch, Market, Meal, Meat, Menu, Mercer, Miami, Omelette, Paris, Pastry, Perry, Poach, Prime, Roasted, Salad, Sauce, Seasonal, Shanghai, Singapore, Spices, Time, Tokyo, Trend, Vegan

Last Friday's Answer: Tracker

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit [www.WonderWordBooks.com](http://www.WonderWordBooks.com), or call 1-800-642-6480.



# Pelicans hold on to defeat Raptors



**NEW ORLEANS** (AP)—Eric Bledsoe capped a 19-point, 10-assist performance with a go-ahead 3-pointer in the final minute, and the New Orleans Pelicans held on for a 120-116 victory over the Toronto Raptors on Saturday night.

Brandon Ingram added 31 points, capped by four free throws in the last 13 seconds to seal the victory. Zion Williamson scored 21 points, highlighted by a pair of driving spin moves in the lane to set up left-handed leaners off the glass.

The Pelicans lost a 12-point lead in the fourth quarter, briefly falling behind in the final four minutes, but were able clamp down defensively and limit the Raptors to just one point during the final 2:47.

"The thing I like the best is our resilience," Pelicans coach Stan Van Gundy said. "It's not easy to give up a double-digit lead with (8:30) to go and then go behind. A lot of teams sort of fade away at that point."

Fred VanVleet scored 27 points and Chris Boucher added 24 for Toronto. Pascal Siakam scored 10 points, but fouled out with 8:30 remaining.

"He struggled, there was no doubt about it," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said of Siakam. "He had a few decent plays and a few good drives in there, but again he obviously struggled."

The Pelicans led 101-89 when Josh Hart made a free throw just after Siakam fouled out.

But Kyle Lowry quickly responded with a 3, igniting a 22-9 run that ended with 3s by OG Anunoby, Powell and VanVleet to put Toronto up 111-110 with 3:16 to go.

Ingram's free throws tied it at 113 with 1:08 left. And after Toronto lost the ball out of bounds, Bledsoe hit his pivotal left-wing 3 with 41.6 seconds left.

"I was kind of locked in," Bledsoe said, noting that he expected Toronto to double-team Ingram and leave someone open on the perimeter. "I was just trying to stay ready and when I got the ball I was going to shoot it with confidence."

VanVleet scored 11 of his 21 first-half points during the last seven minutes of the second period to push Toronto in front late in the half. Lowery added a 3 from 30 feet away to put the Raptors up 60-50 before a 3 by Lonzo Ball and Steven Adams' putback dunk trimmed it to 60-55 at halftime.

Although they've lost four



of their first five games, the Raptors didn't sound inclined to start panicking yet.

"Once we start winning some games and get a lot of minutes—good minutes—together as a team playing solid defense, and getting stops, and running, and things like that, you know, it'll get back to normal," Siakam said. "I just think that the game is focusing on little things and continuing to get better as a team and an individual."

Meanwhile, Van Gundy said he couldn't play Williamson as much as he wanted to in the final few minutes because he had lost a timeout when he unsuccessfully challenged a foul called against New Orleans in the second half.

"I made a huge mistake in the game that you guys should all write about and criticize me for because you'll sound like you really know what's going on," Van Gundy said, noting that even though he thought he might win the challenge, it was too risky to jeopardize what few timeouts he had left. "We should have never challenged that."

## **Knicks 106, Pacers 102**

New coach Tom Thibodeau expects the New York Knicks to play tough and physical.

He also knows a veteran like Austin Rivers can help show his young team how it's done.

Rivers made the go-ahead 3-pointer with 3:23 to play and added another clutch bas-

ket during the game-sealing Saturday night to help the Knicks record a rare 106-102 victory over Indiana.

"I think the experience is huge and it gives us another guy who can put the ball on the floor," Thibodeau said. "He can make 3s, he can play defense and I think that's the way the league is going right now. I thought he made big shots, big plays and he's still working his way through the conditioning piece of it."

Rivers missed New York's first four games with a groin injury before returning to the lineup Thursday. Two nights later, he made an impact.

## **76ers 127, Hornets 112**

Joel Embiid had 19 points and 14 rebounds and Tobias Harris scored 24 points to lead Philadelphia over Charlotte.

Ben Simmons had 15 points, 12 rebound and 11 assists to help the Sixers beat the Hornets for the 12th straight time. Philadelphia has not lost to Charlotte since Nov. 2, 2016.

Terry Rozier scored 35 points for the Hornets.

The Sixers are rolling in Doc Rivers' first season on the bench and followed a 24-point win over Orlando with another victory in which they led by double digits for most of the game.

## **Thunder 108, Magic 99**

Darius Bazley had a season-high 19 points, George Hill scored 13 of his 18 points in

the third quarter and Oklahoma City beat Orlando for its second road victory of the season.

The Thunder ended a three-game losing streak and bounced back nicely from a 33-point loss to New Orleans two nights earlier.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

added 16 points, seven assists and five rebounds while outplaying Magic point guard Markelle Fultz, who made just five of 16 shots and finished with 12 points.

Orlando has dropped two straight after starting the season 4-0. Nikola Vucevic scored a season-best 30 points.

# Masters Tournament field at 84



**GEORGIA**—C.T. Pan set a Masters record of sorts by having to wait 571 days from the time he qualified by winning the RBC Heritage until hitting his opening tee shot at Augusta National. In that respect, Daniel Berger doesn't have it so bad.

He has to wait only about 10 months.

Berger became a talking point for a Masters in November when he reached as high as No. 13 in the world and still wasn't eligible. That's because Augusta National decided to set its field for an April tournament when the COVID-19 pandemic forced postponement until November.

Berger is among 84 players who already have qualified for the Masters going into 2021.

By keeping the field set, the Masters created some consistency in its field size. There were 88 players who had qualified for the Masters

at this time a year ago. Augusta is well on its way to its objective of keeping the field under 100 players.

The Asia-Pacific Amateur in the fall in Australia and the Latin America Amateur scheduled for next month in Peru already have been canceled.

The only way into the Masters from now until April is to win one of the 13 PGA Tour events that offer full FedEx Cup points, or to move into the top 50 in the world ranking a week before the April 8-11 tournament. The 13 events includes the Sentry Tournament of Champions, where only three players—Andrew Landry, Nick Taylor and Richy Werenski—are not yet eligible for Augusta.

The biggest name missing from the field is Rickie Fowler, who was No. 23 when the year started and slipped to No. 53 at year's end. Also missing out on a sure invitation was Erik van Rooyen (No. 51), Kevin Streelman (No. 52) and Robert MacIntyre, who moved up only

AP  
New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson (1) shoots over Toronto Raptors forwards Chris Boucher (25) and OG Anunoby (3) during the second half of an NBA game on Saturday, Jan. 2, 2021, in New Orleans.

Terrence Ross scored 26 points off the Orlando bench.

## **Rockets 102, Kings 94**

John Wall scored 28 points and Houston beat Sacramento despite playing without an injured James Harden.

Harden sat out with a sprained right ankle. He was not listed on the injury report and coach Stephen Silas did not mention his injury in his pregame availability.

De'Aaron Fox had 23 points for the Kings, who lost to the Rockets for the second straight game. Christian Wood had 20 points and 16 rebounds and Eric Gordon added 21 points for Houston.

## **Cavaliers 96, Hawks 91**

Collin Sexton scored 27 points, Andre Drummond had 12 points and 11 rebounds and Cleveland wiped out a 15-point deficit in the third quarter and beat Atlanta.

JaVale McGee finished with 14 points for the Cavaliers.

Clint Capela had 16 points and 16 rebounds for the Hawks, who had 22 turnovers in the final three quarters.

slightly to No. 55 after closing with a 77 in the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai to drop to a tie for 23rd.

Of the players who had to rely on top 50 to earn a Masters spot at the end of the year, Matt Kuchar and Justin Rose were the only ones who played primarily on the PGA Tour. That generally is an indication of a mediocre year.

Rose had only three Top 10s—one of them a runner-up finish in the Singapore Open—and dropped to No. 35 in the world after starting the year at No. 8. Kuchar won the Singapore Open, but he didn't register another Top 10 after he tied for second at Riviera. He did team with Harris English to win the QBE Shootout. That doesn't count.

As for Pan?  
After waiting so long to finally play in the Masters, he matched the low score of the final round with a 68 and tied for seventh, earning a trip back. This time, he only has to wait 144 days for that opening tee shot.



# Cowboys, Giants need a win and Washington loss for playoffs



**NEW YORK** (AP)—The Cowboys must defeat the Giants in today's early game and then hope Washington loses against the Eagles in the late game to make the playoffs.

Playing with a backup quarterback and a defense that's finally found itself, the Dallas Cowboys are the hottest team in the NFC East entering the final weekend of the regular season.

It might not be good enough to get them back to the playoffs.

The Cowboys (6-9) will try to extend their winning streak to four games when they travel to the Meadowlands to face the New York Giants (5-10) on Sunday. The winner could make the postseason. Or not.

Washington (6-9) has the inside track for the division title. It beat Dallas twice, so it has the head-to-head tiebreaker should the teams finish tied. A win in Philadelphia on Sunday gets Washington to the playoffs.

A Washington loss opens the door for Dallas and New York, which is on a three-game skid. A Dallas win and Washington loss gives the Cowboys and new coach Mike McCarthy the division. A Giants victory and a Washington loss gives New York the division crown based on head-to-head play among the three teams. The Giants would be 3-1, Washington 2-2 and Dallas 1-3.

Dallas, which lost quarterback Dak Prescott to a major ankle injury in the first game against New York on Oct. 11, is the surprise. Andy Dalton and the offense are coming off a 500-yard performance in a win over Philadelphia, while the defense has 10 takeaways in the winning streak after 11 in the first 12 games.

"If you can play your best football in December you obviously have the best chance if you have the opportunity to be in the tournament," said McCarthy, who saw his team start 2-7. "The last three weeks we have accomplished that. Our goal clearly is to go to New York and win this game, but hopefully we play our best football this week."

The Giants, who started the season 1-7, were in first place at the beginning of December with a 5-7 record. However, they lost to Arizona (8-7), Cleveland (10-5) and Baltimore (10-5).

"I know the character of our locker room and how we've stuck together," Giants defensive back Logan Ryan said. "We definitely earned the right, the ability to play in this game and it to mean something, and I think that's just coming back around with everything we've



Philadelphia Eagles cornerback Grayland Arnold (37) looks on as cornerback Darius Slay (24) intercepts a pass intended for Dallas Cowboys wide receiver CeeDee Lamb (88) in the second half of an NFL game in Arlington, Texas, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020. AP

endured this year."

Giants quarterback Daniel Jones has not been himself since pulling his right hamstring against Cincinnati on Nov. 29 and spraining his left ankle against the Cardinals on Dec. 13. He missed games against Seattle (Dec. 6) and Cleveland (Dec. 20).

New York's second leading rusher, Jones has run once for 3 yards in his last two starts and has been sacked 12 times. He says the injuries have limited his running. He was averaging 7.3 yards.

## Elliot chasing 1,000

Dallas running back Ezekiel Elliott needs 63 yards rushing to avoid falling short of 1,000 in what amounted to a full season for the first time in his five-year career. The two-time rushing champion never had fewer than 1,357 yards in any

of the four seasons when he played at least 15 games.

The one time Elliott fell short was when he was suspended six games in 2017 over domestic violence allegations. He had 983 yards in 10 games and led the league by averaging 98.3 yards per game.

Twice previously, Elliott sat out the regular-season finale because the Cowboys had all but secured their playoff seeding. This year he missed a game because of injury for the first time, sitting in Week 15 with a calf issue. Elliott came back last week with his second 100-yard game of the season (105) against Philadelphia.

## Garrett again

Former Dallas coach Jason Garrett has seen the Giants' offense struggle in his first year as coordinator. New York is ranked 31st overall and its

257 points are the second fewest in the NFL. The Jets, their co-tenant at MetLife Stadium, has a league low 229.

"We've done some good things that really helped our team win, and at other times, it hasn't been good enough. But you keep learning from your experiences," Garrett said.

Garrett would not say whether he has had any feelers about being a head coach again.

## Boise banter

Dallas offensive coordinator Kellen Moore will call another game amid talk of his being a strong candidate to become coach at his alma mater, Boise State. While Moore declines to discuss specifics of the opening created by Bryan Harsin's move to Auburn, he doesn't hide his interest. Moore left Boise in 2011 as the winningest quarterback in

college football history at 50-3, is beloved there, and says he "loves that place."

"We have this awesome chance to win the NFC East, as crazy as this season has been, so let's go for this thing and let's see what happens," said Moore, in his second year as the Dallas play caller.

## Big-time backups

Two of the most dynamic players in football have missed most of the season.

The Giants have been without running back Saquon Barkley (ACL) since the second game of the season. Wayne Gallman has stepped in and leads the team with 617 yards rushing. He has also run for six TDs.

Dalton, who was signed in May after being released by the Bengals, has posted a 4-4 record since Prescott was hurt. He has thrown for 1,926 yards, 14 touchdowns and seven interceptions.

## Reports: Doug Pederson will return to Eagles

**PHILADELPHIA**—Eagles coach Doug Pederson will return to the team in 2021, according to multiple reports.

Why wouldn't he? Crazed Eagles fans and over-the-top bitter Philly media notwithstanding, Pederson won a Super Bowl trophy in 2017 and took the team to the playoffs in 2018 and 2019. Yes, 2020 went sideways for the team. Surely, that's not enough to run off a head coach who has shown he knows how to win.

According to ESPN, Pederson is due to meet with owner Jeffrey Lurie on Tuesday to discuss plans for the 2021 season.

The plans will include, at a minimum, hiring a new defensive coordinator. Jim Schwartz reportedly won't return.

Lurie truly looks at Pederson as a quarterback whisperer, and while this year may have been a miserable one for Carson Wentz, Lurie could very well see Pederson as the best candidate to get the former No. 2 overall pick back on track and also as the best candidate to develop Jalen Hurts if he winds up as the starter in 2021. From the outside, it looked like Pederson just didn't get Carson this year, but I'm not convinced Lurie feels that way. Lurie may be convinced the Eagles need to move forward with Wentz and believes in Pederson's ability to rehabilitate any quarterback.

## Jets to fire coach

The New York Jets are expected to fire Adam Gase following the team's Week 17 game against the New England Patriots, according to reports.

The news doesn't exactly come as a surprise. In two seasons with the team, Gase has gone 9-22 and failed to lift the Jets' offense despite his background as a coordinator on that side of the ball.

The Jets rank 31st in passing yards and 23rd in rushing yards in 2020. They've

also scored just 24 offensive touchdowns, which is tied for last in the league. Last season, the Jets ranked 27th in passing yards and 31st in rushing. They scored 31 touchdowns in 2019, which ranked 26th.

Curiously, the Jets decided to make the move with the team on a winning streak. After losing their first 13 games of the season, the Jets have won two straight games. Those wins came at a price, however, as the Jets took themselves out of the No. 1 draft spot with last week's win over the Cleveland Browns.

The Jets are expected to talk to a number of candidates once Gase is gone. Kansas City Chiefs offensive coordinator Eric Bienemy is reportedly among the big names the team will consider. Pelissero and Rapoport add Indianapolis Colts defensive coordinator Matt Eberflus, Baltimore Ravens defensive coordinator Wink Martindale, Tennessee Titans offensive coordinator Arthur Smith and Los Angeles Rams defensive coordinator Brandon Staley to that list. They also mention college coaches like Matt Campbell, Jim Harbaugh and Dan Mullen.

Whoever the team hires will have to make some significant decisions about the future of the franchise. The Jets are locked into the No. 2 pick in the 2021 NFL Draft. Assuming Trevor Lawrence goes No. 1 to the Jacksonville Jaguars, the new Jets coach will have to determine whether the team should take a different quarterback with the No. 2 overall pick. Sam Darnold hasn't flourished as an NFL starter, though plenty of offensive players have taken their game to another level after Gase no longer coaches them. That list includes Ryan Tannehill, Kenyan Drake, DeVante Parker and Mike Gesicki.

The next Jets coach will have to determine whether they see that same potential in Darnold.



# Cubs retool to compete after dealing Darvish



**CHICAGO (AP)**—Jed Hoyer insists this time won't be like 2011 for the Chicago Cubs.

The team's new president of baseball operations said that Chicago plans to retool rather than bring out the wrecking ball the way it did nine years ago.

Still, this one will leave a mark.

In his first major deal since replacing friend Theo Epstein, Hoyer sent NL Cy Young Award runner-up Yu Darvish and catcher Victor Caratini to the San Diego Padres for pitcher Zach Davies and four young minor leaguers Tuesday night.

On deck: Willson Contreras? Maybe Kris Bryant, Javier Báez or Anthony Rizzo?

Nothing is off the table,

though Hoyer was adamant: The Cubs aren't following the 2011 plan. That was the year they hired Epstein and Hoyer, and the pair set the long-suffering franchise on a championship course by overhauling the farm system and revamping the front office. Along the way, Cubs fans endured a painful rebuild that included a 101-loss 2012 season.

"I'm not going to run the same playbook that we ran in 2011 and 2012," said Hoyer, who was promoted from general manager when Epstein resigned in November. "I think that would be foolish. That playbook's been copied so many times, it doesn't work anymore."

He said he's trying to keep "one eye on the future" while remaining competitive in the NL Central. The Cubs won the World Series in 2016, ending a drought that dated to 1908, but they haven't advanced in the postseason since the 2017 team lost in the NL Championship Series.

Still led by the 2016 core of Rizzo, Bryant, Baez and others, Chicago won the division in a pandemic-shortened 2020 season but was swept by Miami in



In this Oct. 2, 2020 file photo, Chicago Cubs starting pitcher Yu Darvish throws during the first inning in Game 2 of the team's NL wild-card baseball series against the Miami Marlins in Chicago.

lined up that night with members of the Toronto Blue Jays organization.

"I've got a call with the Blue Jays," Bauer said. "I'm going to check in with them and talk to their pitching coach [Pete Walker] and high-performance coach [Angus Mugford] and see what they have to offer."

The Blue Jays are just one of a number of teams expected to be in on Bauer this winter. Whichever team signs the 29-year-old likely will be spending a pretty penny, as Bauer reportedly is looking for a five or six-year deal worth between \$36 and \$40 million annually.

Toronto is believed to be a suitor for several marquee free agents including outfielder George Springer, infielder D.J. LeMahieu, and former Red Sox center fielder Jackie Bradley Jr.

## ROLLERS

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into the final 10 minutes and change of the match. Rollers Blue gained some cushion in the second half as it continued to spread the wealth, while Sun Palace could not get baskets in streaks.

Sun Palace then failed to overhaul the deficit in the closing stages of the game, as it made only one field goal—courtesy of J.C. Fabros' layup—and one free throw each from Tony Kim and Carlos Elchico.

Kim's split came after he drew a foul on Dela Cruz at the 5:28 mark of the second half with Rollers Blue ahead by 6, 41-35. Kim went for the offensive rebound and claimed he got hit on the head by Dela Cruz, who tried to reach in for the steal. Commotion ensued after that, as Kim pushed Dela Cruz and soon other players (including those in the bench) stepped into the scene. Fortunately, game officials were on top of the situation and managed to prevent the further confrontation of players from the opposing teams.

After some anxious moments in the game, Rollers Blue finished off Sun Palace with Ervin Villarin getting away with two fastbreak layups and Jeff Sagum and Angelo Factor making uncon-

tested baskets in the paint.

Villarin ended up scoring in twin digits for Rollers Blue after tallying 10 points, 8 of them were recorded in the second half. Richardson also 8 of had 10 points in the second half and did a steady job quarterbacking for Rollers Blue.

Itaas paced Sun Palace with his 10 markers, but was limited to one basket in the second half, as he missed a bundle from the 3-point area. Bernardo added 8 points.

Both the Rollers Blue and Sun Palace were awarded trophies at the end of the finals. Individual awards were also handed out to players from the two finalists. Sunjoon Tenorio of Sun Palace took the regular season MVP, while Villarin got the Finals MVP plum. Other individual awardees were Itaas, who topped the assists department (18), and Fabros and Merrick Toves, who ruled the rebounds (29) and blocks (5) categories, respectively.

**Rollers Blue 49**—Villarin 10, Richardson 10, Dela Cruz 7, Deleon Guerrero 6, Sagum 5, King 4, Atalig 3, Factor 2, Toves 2.

**Sun Palace 39**—Itaas 10, Bernardo 8, Fabros 6, Kim 5, Contreras 5, Elchico 3, Tenorio 2.

**Scoring by halves:** 24-24, 49-39.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Rollers Blue's Greg Deleon Guerrero dribbles in front of two Sun Palace defenders during the second half of their title game in the boys U19 division of the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament last Saturday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

## JP

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all first placer Reinier submitted 36:17, while his wife and women's division top placer Melissa logged 39:21.

In the men's 10K non-competitive division, the Top

3 finishers were Joseph Yap (58:57), Aaron Pamintuan (1:04:19), and Jared Pangelinan (1:43:00). In the women's division, Aubrey Castro was ranked first after timing in at 1:02:00 and was followed by Mia Abuan (1:10:37) and Audrey Castro (1:11:00).

and Detroit Tigers over the past decade.

## Bauer announces meeting with Jays

Trevor Bauer is arguably the top free agent available this offseason, and at least one American League East team appears to be in the mix for the 2020 National League Cy Young award winner.

Bauer took to Twitter on Thursday to provide an update on his free agency process. He announced he had a meeting

For the 5K, Julie Chavez recorded 32:51 to prevail in the women's division and beat Kailyn Paaue (35:57), and Phoenix Gross (38:07). In the men's 5K Kieran Paaue (24:14) of Canada was joined in the Top 3 by Saipan's

Moshe Sikkell (31:17) and Mark Costales (34:08).

Meanwhile, proceeds from JP Hero Run will be donated to the Marianas March Against Cancer and the Commonwealth Cancer Association. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rintaro Miyawaki, left, is congratulated by Tan Siu Lin Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino for placing third in the men's 10K race.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

JP Hero Run 10K third placer Noriko Jim, left, gets her prize.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

JP Hero Run 10K runner-up Kaithlynn Chavez, left, receives her prize from Tan Siu Lin Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino during the awards presentation for the virtual event last Wednesday in Garapan.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shuji Kuroda, left, shows his runner-up prize in the men's 10K race.





**Pelicans hold  
on to defeat  
Raptors**

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**Cowboys, Giants  
need a win and  
Washington loss  
for playoffs**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

# Rollers Blue takes U19 title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER

**R**ollers Blue claimed the boys U19 division crown in the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament after topping Sun Palace, 49-39, last Saturday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

Rollers Blue came into the title duel with a twice-to-beat advantage, having won all its games in the preliminary round and wrapped up the finals early by beating Sun Palace in Game 1. The eventual champion, though, had



to work doubly hard in the second half to fend off Sun Palace, which fought tooth and nail in the majority of the match before firing blanks in the stretch for the loss.

Sun Palace and Rollers Blue were back to square one after

the first half, as the game was tied at halftime, 24-all.

Chioni Dela Cruz scored 7 points for Rollers Blue in the first 20 minutes of Game 1, while five of his teammates contributed at least one basket each to keep the match in a deadlock. Kristian Itaas had 2 markers for Sun Palace, including a pair of triples, while Clarence Contreras added another trey and a 2-point basket to keep their team in the game at the break.

When the game resumed, Rollers Blue and Sun Palace were still at it with the former just ahead by 4, 39-35, going

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Rollers Blue coach Joe Diaz, left, poses with his players after they beat Sun Palace in the finals, 49-39.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Rollers Blue's Ervin Villarin, front, is fouled by Sun Palace's J.C. Fabros during the second half of their title game in the boys U19 division of the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament last Saturday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

## JP Hero Run winners recognized

The Tan Siu Lin Foundation awarded prizes to the winners in the 10K competitive race of the JP Hero Run Virtual Edition last Wednesday.

Kaithlyn Chavez and Shuji Kuroda received \$300 each for their runner-up finish in the women's and men's division, while Noriko Jim and Rintaro Miyawaki took home \$200 apiece. Top finishers Reinier and Melissa Paaue of Canada will get their prizes (\$500 each) via mail.

This year's JP Hero Run was opened to off-island participants, as there was no actual race due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Runners had to do the single run between Nov. 20 and Dec. 20 at any course

of their choice. The Paauees were among the more than 100 off-island runners that joined the annual event. Overall, the JP Hero Run Virtual Edition drew 613 participants.

"We would like to thank all the participants of this year's JP Hero Run. It was tough hosting this event because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we, at the TSL Foundation, went ahead with the race, as we want to encourage our community to remain active while still following safety protocols at these challenging times," said TSL Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino, who handed the prizes to the four winners on-island.

"Congratulations to the

winners and all the finishers. We hope to see you in the 2021 edition of the JP Hero Run and hopefully, it will not be a virtual event this time. Let's stay safe, healthy, and active in 2021 and beyond," Tolentino added.

Chavez and Jim finished the 10K competitive event of the JP Hero Run under the 50-minute mark with the former clocking in at 45:45 and the latter recording 46:11. Both ran the CPA Airport Field course, joining the more than 100 players and coaches of the CNMI men's, women's, and youth national football teams.

Kuroda ran along Beach Road, from Minatchom At-dao in Susupe to R&J Wines in Garapan and back, and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Winners in the 10K race of the JP Hero Run Virtual Edition pose with organizers of the event, which was hosted by the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, during the awards ceremony last Wednesday in Garapan.

timed in at 38:43. Miyawaki, on the other hand, completed the 10K event in New York,

but was on-island for a short holiday vacation to personally receive his prize. Men's

division champion and over-

**See JP on Page 19**